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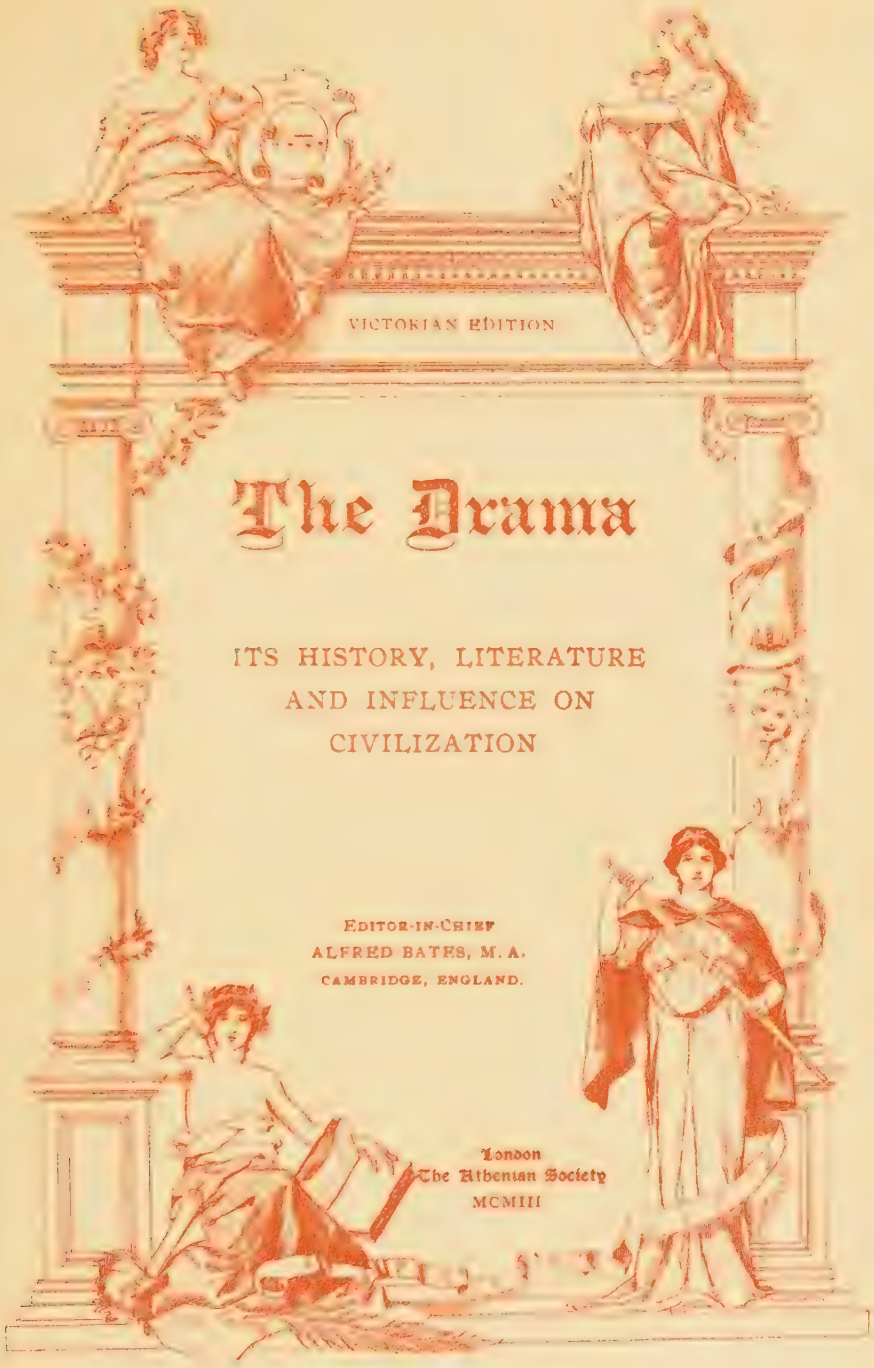

VICTORIAN EDITION

The Drama

ITS HISTORY, LITERATURE AND INFLUENCE ON CIVILIZATION

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
ALFRED BATES, M. A.
CAMBRIDGE, ENGLAND.

London
The Athenian Society
MCMIII

PETER THE GREAT

After an original painting by Rokalowitz

industrial and mechanical centres of Europe
return, he was received with acclaim by his
people, and at once began the great reforms
solidified his country and distinguished his

Russian Drama

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Prologue

RUSSIAN DRAMA.—Until the end of the seventeenth century Russia, then commonly called Muscovy, lay sprawling on the east of Europe. It consisted of a weltering mass of semi-civilized tribes, Christianized, yet not without relics of primitive Paganism. Towards 1700 Peter, the strenuous ruler of this vast region, visited Western Europe to learn the methods of its progress. The fur-clad Tzar doffed his royal robes and labored as a shipwright in Holland A few years later, at Poltava, he wrecked the mad ambition of Charles XII. of Sweden, and built St. Petersburg in the

marshes of the Neva. The slumbering giant of the East had been aroused to consciousness of his strength, and had started on the highway of Empire.

Peter's great successor, Catherine II., transferred to her palace the refined usages of the court of Louis XV., of France, made French literature the fashion, and herself wrote comedies in the approved style.

From the eleventh century the scanty literature of Russia had consisted of religious manuals and monkish chronicles, though among the people there were cherished rude ballads, which were later turned into prose narratives. When printing was introduced in the sixteenth century it was strictly confined to religious and historical works. Not until the seventeenth century did the belated religious drama appear.

But under the energetic Peter's rule came translations from French as well as Latin classics. Lomontsov was indefatigable in writing verse and prose, essays and tragedies, while others adhered to the beaten track of history. Under Catherine II. a lively generation of poets sprang up. Lyrics and epics abounded, but fables were still more

popular. Denies von Visin, who had visited France, produced genuine national comedies, ridiculing the coarse features of Russian society and exposing the cruel treatment of serfs. But the laureate of the court was Derjavine, whose odes became known throughout Europe. Some ambitious writers incurred the displeasure of the Tzarina, and were banished to Siberia.

In the reign of Alexander I., at the opening of the nineteenth century, the leaders in literature were the historian Karamzin, the fabulist Krilov, the poet Jukovski, and Pushkin, who imitated Byron's *Don Juan*, and excelled him in the drama. But the finest specimen of Russian comedy is *The Inspector*, by Gogol, which is presented entire in this volume. Strange to say, Gogol sank into religious melancholy and sought to destroy all his works.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century knowledge of Russian literature spread like a flood through Western Europe and America. The novels of Gogol, Turgenieff and Dostoievski became familiar, but above all the powerful writings of Count Les Tolstoi attracted attention. This is undoubtedly owing to his peculiar religious

and social ideas. A nobleman by birth, he assumed a peasant's dress and mode of life, and, when he ceased writing novels, issued creeds and confessions and short stories. His drama, *The Power of Darkness*, thoroughly deserves its name by its revelation of evil.

Recent writers have but followed in the footsteps of these great masters of the latter half of the nineteenth century; and, while they have not excelled their masterpieces, they have maintained the reputation of their country in the drama and novel.

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Russian Drama.

I.

Dawn of Russian Literature.

Russian literature may be divided into oral and written, the former including what are known as bilini, or tales of old times, which have come down to us in great numbers, as sung by wandering minstrels all over the country. It is only within the nineteenth century that they have been collected and divided into cycles, including those of the older heroes; of Vladimir, prince of Kiev; of Novgorod, of Moscow, of the Cossacks, of Peter the Great, and the modern period. These poems, if such they may be called, are not in rhyme; but there is a certain cadence which is preserved throughout. For centuries these peasant songs attracted no attention, until, in the reign of Alexander I, Nikolai Karamzin presented to the Russians a past of which they had known but little. Within more recent times, many

editors and publishers have busied themselves over collections extending far back into the Middle Ages.

Legendary Cycles.

In the first cycle we find the repetition of certain conventional phrases characteristic of all ancient poetry, from Homer downward, as "the damp earth," the "green wine," and "the bright sun." The heroes of this cycle are monstrous beings, and seem to be merely impersonations of the powers of nature. Sometimes we have giants of the mountain, as Sviatogor, and the serpent Gorinich, the latter living in caves and having a care of the precious metals. In another personage the qualities of the giant and the serpent are united. There is also the pagan idol, who is a great glutton, and Nightingale the Robber, who terrifies travellers and lives in a nest built upon six oaks.

In the second cycle the legends group themselves round the celebrated prince, Vladimir of Kiev, in whose time the Christian religion was introduced into Russia. The chief hero is Ilya Murometz, who performs prodigies of valor, and is of gigantic stature and superhuman strength. The cycle of Novgorod deals with the stories of Vasilü-Buslaevich and Sadko, the rich merchant. The fourth cycle has for its theme the aristocracy, with Moscow as the capital of the future empire. We now hear of the taking of Kazan, of the conquest of Siberia by Yermak, of Ivan the Terrible and his confidant. It is worthy of note that in the popular traditions Ivan, in spite of his cruelties, is not spoken of

with hatred. Many spirited poems are devoted to the achievements of Stenka Razia, the bold robber of the Volga, who was long a popular hero. The cycle of Peter the Great is a very interesting one. We have songs in abundance on the wonderful achievements of the mighty tzar, and there is also a poem on his death. The Cossack songs dwell on the glories of the sech, the sufferings of the people from the invasion of Turks and Mongols, and the fall of the Cossack republic. Belonging to the modern period are many songs on Napoleon. There are also large collections of religious poems, many of which contain very curious legends, forming a complete record of the beliefs of the Middle Ages, together with ample materials for the study of comparative mythology and folk-lore.

Written and Printed Works.

The earliest written work in the Russian language was a recension of the Slavonic gospels, dated 1056-7, and this was followed in 1073 by the *Miscellany* of Sviotoslaff, a kind of Russian encyclopædia compiled from Greek sources for that prince by John the deacon. Next came the *Discourse Concerning the Old and New Testament,* by the metropolitan of Kiev, in which there is a panegyric on Prince Vladimir, the hero of much popular poetry. As elsewhere in Europe during the Middle Ages, the monks were the only conservators of learning; but they were an ungodly crew, as we learn from the writings of Theodosius, one of the Pestcherski cloister. Paganism, he says, is still in vogue among the

people, unrebuked by the clergy, many of whom have given themselves over to drunkenness. A *Discourse to the Brethren* was also written by Zhidiata, bishop of Novgorod.

Russian history, though still largely mingled with tradition, begins with the *Chronicle* of Nestor, also a monk of the Pestcherski cloister at Kiev, whose records, beginning with the deluge, as did those of other eleventh century annalists, extend, with only two breaks, to the time of Alexis Mikhailovich, father of Peter the Great.

It was not until 1564 that the first book was printed, though a printing-press was set up at Moscow some years before. The book, which contained the *Acts of the Apostles* and the *Epistles,* stirred up the enmity of those who earned their living as copyists, and with them sided many priestly fanatics, who thought it degrading that the sacred works should be multiplied by such an art, just as the Arabs still refuse to allow the Koran to be printed. Up to 1600 only sixteen books had been printed in Moscow or elsewhere in the empire. In the *Book of Household Management,* which belongs to the time of Ivan the Terrible, is a faithful picture of the Russia of the age, with all its barbarism and ignorance, showing the unbounded authority of the husband in his household, even to the personal chastisement of his wife, whose chief duty is to minister to his wants.

To the reign of the first Romanoffs belongs the story of the siege of Azov, a prose poem, in which is described, in inflated style, how, in 1637, a body of Cossacks triumphantly repelled the attacks of the Turks. There is

also an account of the siege of the Troitza monastery by the Poles, during the so-called period of troubles, which deals with the adventures of the false Demetrius and the Polish invasion that followed. But the most important work of this period is by Gregory Karpoff Kotoshikhin, who draws a sad picture of his native land, with ignorance, cruelty and superstition everywhere rampant. It is chiefly from his description that we can reconstruct the Russia of the time before Peter the Great, as, later, Zabielin has done in his work on domestic life. No less gloomy is the story of the Serb, Yuri Krizhanich, who suggests education as a remedy, and to that end wrote a critical Servian grammar, with comparisons of the Russian, Polish and Croatian languages. The struggles of the patriarch Nikon with the tzar were described by Shusherin and again by Dean Stanley in his *Lectures on the Eastern Church.* This famous divine, whose emendations of the sacred books, made necessary by the blunders of generations of copyists, led to a schism in the Russian church, was banished to Siberia, and wrote most of his works in Tobolsk. His portrait, tomb and robes, still preserved in Moscow, show that he was a man seven feet in stature. With Simeon Polotzki, who was educated in Kiev, then in Polish territory, and came to Moscow about 1665, ends the old period of Russian literature. He was tutor to Feodor, son of the emperor Alexis, and to him was partly due the introduction of western culture into Russia. Among his works are several poems and religious dramas, the latter including *The Prodigal Son* and *Nebuchadnezzar.* All were fairly representative of their

era, and showed the possibilities of authorship along their respective lines.

The Religious Drama.

The Religious drama in its earliest form, that of Mysteries, was introduced into Russia from Poland in the beginning of the twelfth century. As Tiechonravoff states in his *Origin of the Russian Theatre,* they were known under the name of Religious Dialogues, or simply as Histories, and were at first played exclusively in monasteries; nor is it till 1603 that we read of their being performed by students in the universities and public schools in Polish or Latin. The earliest Latin Dialogue that has come down to us is entitled *Adam,* and bears on its title page the date 1507; the earliest in Polish is *The Life of the Savior from His Entry Into Jerusalem,* and was composed by a Dominican of Cracow, in the year 1533. The latter describes the closing events in Christ's earthly career so minutely that it consists of more than a hundred scenes, and four days were required for its presentation.

The Vertep.

So far, the history of the early drama in Russia does not differ from that of other countries. But there was another class of dramatic representations peculiar to Russia, and which were as essentially popular as the Mysteries were ecclesiastical. These were exhibited in a species of perambulating booth called "Vertep," and

divided into three stories; the first and third of which were occupied by the performing figures, the middle one being devoted to the machinery necessary to put the marionettes in motion. They formed the chief attraction at the large fairs held in the principal cities during the Christmas holidays, and the card-figures consisted of the Virgin, Joseph, the Savior, Angels, Shepherds, and the Magi. As might be expected in these Christmas pieces, the Nativity and the Massacre of the Innocents usually formed the subjects. To represent the latter, other characters were introduced, including Herod, Death, in the shape of a skeleton, and the Devil, who came in at the end to carry off the soul of the godless monarch.

Like the Mysteries, the Vertep plays were at first of a strictly religious character, but were gradually changed into rude satires on contemporary life and manners. In their earlier form they were patronized by the clergy, who constantly lent their churches for these performances, but later they were strictly forbidden. The severest ecclesiastical prohibitions, however, were of no avail, and they continued to enjoy popular favor till as late as the seventeenth century. Not that the Church ever neglected the drama as a means of educating the people. It had its three annual scenic festivities, or acts. The first represented the delivery of the Three Children from the furnace of fire, and was played at Christmas both in Moscow and Novgorod; the second, dating from the fifteenth century, represented the entry of the Savior into Jerusalem, and was performed on Palm Sunday; the third, played on Sunday in Carnival

week, was preceded by religious ceremonies of unusual solemnity, and depictured the final judgment.

Very few of these Mysteries have been preserved, and those that we possess are characterised by the same peculiarities which have been remarked in a previous volume in connection with English miracle-plays of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. There is a similar confusion of the terms tragedy and comedy in their titles, an equally profound indifference to chronology, and a like mixture of real with imaginary personages. Thus, in the so-called "pitiful comedy" of *Adam and Eve,* printed at Kiev about 1675, it is only the prologue that is in any way concerned with the story of our first parents; the four acts of which it is composed being devoted to the exploits of Alexis Michaelovitch, and both biblical and allegorical personages mingle freely with historical characters throughout the drama. Some of the Mysteries were written with a polemical object. The author, for instance, of *The Martyrdom of Stephen,* evidently a Catholic, divulges the intention with which his play was produced, when he tells us in the prologue that "Peter was undeservedly deprived of his supremacy," and further dilates on the "juggling tricks" of Sophia, who, contrary to all justice, had "usurped her brother's rights."

Origin of the Theatre.

It is, however, to the Vertep that we trace the origin of the modern Russian theatre. As already remarked, these shows began, from about the middle of the seven-

teenth century, to lose their exclusively religious character, and, in place of biblical legends, represented humorous scenes, in which history and the follies of the period were broadly caricatured. This latter form of drama corresponds to the English interludes, which were most in favor a little before the time of Shakespeare. Of the verteps which have been preserved, the majority have at least one rascolnik among their personages, the word, though originally meaning a schismatic, being commonly applied to those separatists who adhered to the use of the mass-books and rituals such as they were before their revision by Nikon. The opposition made by these sectarians to the religious reform inaugurated by the government afforded an unfailing theme of satire. In one of them, the rascolnik laments the backslidings of the age, which has so far lapsed from the pure faith that "even old believers began to wear short coats in lieu of the long flowing robe, and to shave their beards," innovations sufficiently startling to justify the prediction that "before long Antichrist will appear on earth." In 1705, about which time the play was produced, an imperial decree had been issued, recommending, and in some cases commanding, government clerks to adopt the foreign mode of dress and to shave the beard. This edict was at variance, not only with fashion, but with the old Russian proverb: "Man is made in God's image. Witness his beard." Thus it provoked so much opposition that a certain priest was commissioned by the synodical authorities to write a tract, "*On the Image and Likeness of God in Man,*" in which a number of learned arguments are adduced from the

Bible and the Fathers to prove that the beard may be cut off without imperilling salvation or losing the marks of our heavenly origin. If, at this day, we are able to divest such a contest of its comic elements, we must continue to see in it the same earnestness and fervor and acrimony that have characterized like opposition to dramatic progress at many times and in many places.

School Plays.

As early as 1721 it was ordered that the students of all public seminaries "should play comedies twice in a year." Nor were these plays restricted to Mysteries or even Interludes, but included translations and adaptations from the work of foreign dramatists. Molière would seem to have been the favorite author, *Le Médecin Malgré Lui* and *Les Précieuses Ridicules* both being played in the same year at the Moscow academy. Among the public schools, the cadet corps at St. Petersburg enjoyed a high reputation for the zeal with which its teachers promoted the study of modern languages and literature. These efforts were not lost upon the pupils, who formed among themselves an amateur literary society, the members of which were accustomed once a week to meet and read original compositions in prose and verse. There was one pupil whose papers were considered to be of such superior merit that they were submitted by the president of the society to the authorities of the corps, and a selection from the best of them was published at the expense of the establishment.

This pupil was Alexander Sumarokoff, destined to become famous as "the founder of the Russian theatre."

Sumarokoff.

Alexander Petrovitch Sumarokoff was born at St. Petersburg, in 1718, and entered the cadet corps in his fourteenth year. His ambition was naturally excited by the special marks of favor with which his first productions had been received, and, on leaving school, in 1740, he commenced writing for the stage, taking the plays of Racine and Voltaire as his models. The first result of his labors was a tragedy entitled *Khoreff,* which was played by royal command at the palace in presence of the empress Elizabeth. Among the audience was the son of a Yarosloff tradesman, named Volkoff, upon whom the performance produced such an effect that, on returning to his native town, he hired a coach-house, and, with the assistance of a few friends, gave a series of theatrical entertainments. The building was little better than a barn, the pieces played of no literary value, the scenery most meagre in quantity and kind, the actors inexperienced amateurs; but, happily, the audiences were not critical, and the undertaking proved so successful that within a few years a regular theatre was built, and Volkoff appointed its director.

In 1756 a theatre was opened at St. Petersburg, under the management of Sumarokoff, the principal actor being Volkoff, who is described as "a man of good parts and liberal education." It is interesting to notice that among the plays produced were an adaptation of Shake-

speare's *Hamlet*, in which the original is very closely followed, and a prose translation of *Julius Cæsar*, by an unknown writer. To judge from the complaints with which Sumarokoff's letters are filled, the post of director was as laborious as it was thankless. On one occasion, for example, he piteously and comically remarks: "Many a man has been made a drunkard by good fortune; will it be astonishing if I am driven to drink by my troubles?" The majority, however, of his misfortunes must be attributed to his vain and domineering character, and to the exaggerated estimate which he formed of his own genius. Owing to the mean and petulant jealousy with which he regarded his more eminent contemporaries, he was at variance, during his whole life, with all who ventured to dispute his supremacy in the world of letters. These quarrels were not seldom characterized by a brutality of phrase that shows to what a degree he was envious of all celebrity which did not fall to his own share. "Thank God," he exclaimed, as he stood over the grave of Lomonosoff—an indifferent dramatist, but the greatest lyric poet of the age—"the fool is quieted at last, and the cur will bark no more."

Sumarokoff was at least impartial in his hatreds, for it would be difficult to mention the name of a single Russian writer of the period who was not at one time or another exposed to his abuse, and equally difficult to select one of his letters in which he does not complain of some one or something. He regarded himself as "the Racine of the North," did not wish any plays but his own to be put on the stage of his theatre, and pestered the court so persistently with his complaints about

"neglected genius," that Catherine once exclaimed, with more truth than politeness, "the man is out of his mind, and will always be a conceited ass." Though the verdict may be harsh, it is more than justified by the extravagantly ludicrous praises which Sumarokoff was pleased to lavish on himself. "Not alone in the drama," he boastingly exclaims, "but in every kind of poetry, I am the only author in Russia;" and along with some complimentary verses addressed to Catherine he sent a letter in which he complacently reminds her, "the reign of Augustus has found its Horace." Soon after he had ceased to be director of the theatre he removed to Moscow, where he composed his tragedy, *Demetrius the Pretender,* besides three comedies which were intended to "purify and reform the dissolute habits and the crass ignorance" of that city. "Alas! Moscow requires a hundred Molières, and I am alone," whines the poor comedian. But to all such whimperings his audiences might reasonably have replied, "Physician, heal thyself," for, tortured with the idea that his genius was not duly appreciated, harassed by domestic troubles and the abandonment of her home by his wife, and burdened with heavy debts, Sumarokoff sought relief in deep potations; and intemperance, no doubt, hastened his death, which took place in 1777.

Sumarokoff as a Dramatist.

Sumarokoff occupies the same position in the dramatic literature as Lomonosoff in the lyric poetry of Russia. They were the first to accept the French classics as

models of literary excellence; but while in the odes of Lomonosoff there is genuine poetic feeling, there is an utter absence of inspiration in the dramas of Sumarokoff. In spite of his slavish observance of the three unities, and all those other laws by which the pseudo-classicists had reduced poetry to a mere mechanical art, his imitation is at the best but a surface one. His tragedies represent one passion, never the whole character of a man in all its manifestations; they describe a feeling rather than show us human nature modified and influenced by the surrounding circumstances of individual life. As with Racine, love is the prevailing passion in the tragedies of the Russian dramatist. But while the love of Hermione has its subtle characteristics which distinguish and separate it from the love of Roxana, the heroines of Sumarokoff, howsoever he may christen them, all love and express their love in one and the same stereotyped fashion. There is no individuality in their utterances; there is no reason, beyond the caprice of a poet, why the speeches of an Olga should not be assigned to an Osnielda. Racine has often been reproached with turning his Romans and Greeks into Frenchmen. We cannot accuse Sumarokoff of having transformed them into Russians. They have, it is true, Russian names; but there is nothing in their sentiments, their speech, or their actions, which can be brought into harmony either with the time in which they lived or with the people whom they are supposed to represent. Beyond their names, there is absolutely nothing Russian about them.

The success which Sumarokoff's tragedies, with all their shortcomings, enjoyed for a long time, is due

to the fact that, unlike those of Lomonosoff, they are not simply didactic, but abound with situations that can scarcely fail to produce an effect upon the stage. The true integrity of plot may not always be well sustained; but there is at least action and movement in his plays. Most of them have two or three "farewell scenes," which, according to Karamsin, formed Sumarokoff's strong point; and Catherine, in one of her letters to Voltaire, eulogizes their tenderness and pathos. Another reason for their temporary popularity is, perhaps, to be found in the thoroughness with which they reflect the ideas of the eighteenth century. Thus, in *Demetrius the Pretender*, we have a diatribe against the abuses of the Papal power; while in another of his dramas, entitled *Mstieslaff*, the chief character is little more than the mouthpiece of Montesquieu, whose opinions on love, honor and education are almost literally reproduced.

Khoreff.

Some of Sumarokoff's dramas, as *Khoreff*, *Demetrius the Pretender*, and *Mstieslaff*, profess to be historical tragedies; though, from the freedom the poet has employed in treating historical events, they scarcely deserve the name. In *Khoreff* we have the story of Kie, the reputed founder of Kiev, whose brother Khoreff falls in love with Osnielda, the captive daughter of Zavloch, governor of the city. His love is discovered, and Kie, fearful lest the charms of Osnielda should have overcome the patriotism of his brother, who is appointed

to lead out a large force against her father, determines to put her to death. The resolve is barely executed when the sword of the defeated rebel is brought to Kie by a herald from his brother. Khoreff, on hearing of the suspicions to which he has been exposed, and their cruel result, kills himself in despair. The play abounds in the tragic element, and all its parts are well sustained throughout, though the style must be accounted harsh even for its time. It doubtless added even more to Sumarokoff's reputation than *Demetrius the Pretender.*

Semiera.

The conflict between love and duty, which constitutes the leading idea in *Khoreff*, is again represented under a different aspect in the tragedy of *Semiera*. Oleg has wrested Kiev from the hands of Oscold, its reigning prince; and the dethroned monarch, having vainly attempted to recover his lost authority, is cast into prison and condemned to death. In the meantime, Rostislaff, Oleg's son, has become enamored of Semiera, the daughter of Oscold, and, moved by her piteous prayers, determines to free her father. But when the liberated chieftain, at the head of those nobles who still remained faithful to his cause, marches against Oleg, the claims of patriotism and duty, for a while silenced by the voice of love, resume their sway, and it is Rostislaff who, by his daring and bravery, defeats the enemy and saves his father in the very thick of the bloody fight. It will be observed that here, as in many other places, Sumarokoff has borrowed from Voltaire, and there is a striking re-

Demetrius, under the pretence of
Ivan the Terrible, claimed the
He became the hero of Sumarokoff's
piece, DEMETRIUS THE PRETENDER,
which ranks second only to that
RICHARD III.

semblance between the situation in which Rostislaff is placed and that which Tite occupies in Voltaire's *Brute*. Other resemblances evidence this borrowing quality, but they are not of a character to detract seriously from the author's originality.

Demetrius the Pretender.

Love, or rather the sentimental affectation which frequently passes for love, forms the subject of *Demetrius the Pretender*. Demetrius has grown tired of his Polish wife, and fixes his affections on Ksenia, the daughter of Shouisky, one of his nobles; but the maiden's previous betrothal to a young Galician prince is a fatal hindrance to the accomplishment of his desires. Baffled in his attempts to turn her from her former love, the tyrant determines to vent his displeasure on Shouisky; and the latter, driven to extremities, foments an insurrection among the nobles. They are only too glad to seize any pretext for avenging the numberless wrongs they have had to endure under the cruel rule of the Pretender, and the revolt soon assumes such serious proportions that Demetrius, to avoid falling into the hands of his enemies, slays himself. After his wonted fashion, Sumarokoff has completely falsified history; and Demetrius, who in reality was a tolerant and merciful sovereign, is represented as a villain of the blackest dye. As an example of the melodramatic style in which the whole tragedy is written, may be quoted the soliloquy pronounced by the hero at the moment when he hears the revolted nobles thundering at the gates of his

palace; many of the ideas, it will be observed, are borrowed from Shakespeare's *Richard III:*

The crown no more holds firmly on my head,
And the end of my greatness is at hand.
Each moment I await the sudden change.
Oh, threatening walls of Kremlin palace,
Methinks, each hour I hear ye plead against me:
Malefactor! thou art our enemy and all the country's curse;
The citizens cry out, we have been despoiled by thee;
And the temples sob forth, we have been deluged by blood.
All the fair pleasaunces round Moscow lie waste,
And hell from lowest depths has oped its mouth upon me.
I see the dreary steep that leads to Hades,
I see the tortured ghosts that people Tartarus,
I see and feel already the flames of Gehenna.
I gaze up to heaven, the blissful seat of Paradise,
Where good tzars rest, in all the beauty of nature,
And angels embathe them with the dew of Paradise.
But to me, the accursed, what hope remains?
There I shall be tortured, even as I am tortured here.
No longer a crowned monarch in his royal city,
But an outlawed criminal tormented in hell,
I perish, even as my people through me have perished.
Flee, tyrant, flee! but whom to flee, myself?
For I see none other but myself.
Flee! but whither? thou bearest thy hell with thee.
The assassin is upon thee, flee! but I am that assassin.
Thus do I fear myself and mine own shadow.
Vengeance! but on whom? myself? avenge myself?
I love myself; yet wherefore I love myself, I cannot say.
All things cry out against me:—plunderings, perverted judgments,
Each bloody crime, all with one voice cry upon me.
My life is a curse, my death will be a blessing, to every man.
How I envy the lot of the very poorest of my subjects!

For the beggar in his poverty will at times find rest,
While I upon a throne cannot find a moment's peace.
Be patient, then, and vanquish, even as thou didst win
thy throne by treachery;
Plague and be plagued; live and die a tyrant.

Sumarokoff's Comedies.

The comedies of Sumarokoff, of which *The Usurer, The Guardian,* and *Tressotinius, or the Pedant,* are the principal ones, never enjoyed the favor which was for a time extended to his tragedies, and have long been forgotten. They are badly constructed, so far as plot is concerned, and are equally weak in characterization; while the vices against which they are directed are not so much exposed in action as denounced in elaborate tirades. Not unfrequently these tirades are rather in the nature of invective than of satire; as where he speaks of lawyers, his special object of aversion, as "descendants of Ham," and "bosom friends of the Devil;" or where he declares that the only effect produced by the reforms of Peter on the nobility has been "to change them from powdered men to powdered apes." The vices which he mostly castigates are the same as those that had already provoked the satire of *Kantemier and Catherine;* but his gall is chiefly excited by the corruption which in his time generally prevailed among the judges. "A corrupt judge," he angrily exclaims, "is worse than a thief, worse than the foulest of reptiles." It required, however, a century of satirists before public opinion in Russia became sufficiently pronounced to compel the legislator

to free the administration of justice from venal partiality, and to make the magistrate the just decider between right and wrong.

Sumarokoff himself claimed to have rendered priceless service to the development of dramatic art in Russia. "That which Athens once possessed," he writes with the calm assurance peculiar to the man, "Russia now enjoys, thanks to my labors. That which Germany, spite of her many writers, has not obtained —a national drama—I alone have created in a country where the art of literature is only beginning to be understood, and whose language has only now acquired purity and polish." Posterity has refused to endorse this extravagant self-laudation, but has chosen rather to accept the verdict of Belinsky, one of the greatest of Russian critics, and regard Sumarokoff as "a poor littérateur; a conceited, talentless versifier; a weak, contemptible thinker, utterly ignorant of the higher laws of art."

II.

Peter the Great and Catherine the Great.

In the reigns of Peter the Great and Catherine II was concentrated all that there was of literary progress to the end of the eighteenth century. To the reforms of Peter the Great Russia owes her existence as a European nation, or indeed as a nation at all, in the proper sense of the word. Before his time Russia was merely the object of national sentiment; after him she became the object of national thought. In the days of Catherine the Russians were no longer stamped as barbarians, even by the French, whose language, literature and drama they freely borrowed.

Russian Illiteracy.

Compared with the illiteracy that prevailed in Russia before the reign of Peter the Great, the mediæval ages elsewhere in Europe formed a period of comparative enlightenment. The only hopeful feature was that the self-delusion which characterises all nations that have long been isolated was rudely shaken, and that foreign intercourse was beginning to disclose to the Muscovites the abysses of their own ignorance.

SAINT PETER'S COLLEGE LIBRARY

From the first, seeking after knowledge was condemned by the priests, whose sermons were directed against the blind imitation of foreigners. Even Nikon was alarmed at the innovations introduced from abroad, and in his fanaticism burned pictures, destroyed an organ, and cut to pieces the liveries of his servants. In a collection of spiritual precepts are the following sentences: "Abominable before God is he who studies geometry. Prefer simplicity to wisdom. That which is higher than you, never seek to explore; that which is deeper than you, never seek to fathom; but the learning which comes from God and is given to you ready-made, that keep for yourself."

The Kremlin.

Yet Moscow presented then one of the finest specimens of civic architecture in the world. The Kremlin had attained the full development of its architectural beauty; the typical harmony of its configuration was not yet destroyed by those modern superstructures which spoil it in our days; and with the gable roof of its palaces painted in checks, with the towers of its white walls overlooking the river, with the golden cupolas of its churches and the medley of its belfries rising in the air and glittering in the sunshine, it presented already in those times that enchanting spectacle which, more than a century later, stopped Napoleon in his march, and interrupted the sombre current of his thought with a moment of æsthetical delight. Inside this Kremlin, in this citadel of palaces and churches,

where the hours of the day were marked by ecclesiastical services, where the sacerdotal vestments and the royal mantles intermingled in the gorgeousness of alternating ritual and ceremonial, strange things were taking place in the latter part of the seventeenth century. The tzar, his family, his court, seemed given over to a new kind of amusement; in the private apartments of the palace, in the presence of his majesty, a German theatrical company gave performances under the direction of Godfried Gregory, the Lutheran clergyman of the German suburb.

Early Theatricals.

In 1672, three days after the birth of his son Peter, Tzar Alexis ordered Gregory to prepare theatrical entertainments. The first piece given had for its subject *Esther and Ahasuerus;* then came *Judith*, *Joseph*, *Adam and Eve*, and others; at first in German, but soon Russian boys were intrusted to the pastor, to be taught the art of acting; translations were made into Russian, and finally the first original comedy was written by Simeon of Polotsk. This learned monk was a teacher of the tzar's children, and, at the same time, poet laureate of the court. His comedy, entitled *The Prodigal Son*, has been preserved in an illustrated edition of the time, and still makes interesting reading. The author took an important part in the literary passion which invaded the court; his lessons were so attractive, so clever—sometimes in verse to make it easier for the memory—that the tzar's daughter, for

the first time since the Tartar yoke, left her maiden apartments. Princess Sophia shared the benefits of Simeon's lessons with her eldest brother, Theodor. Later she became herself a writer; she composed a tragedy on Esther; she is said to have made attempts at translating Molière—at least Molière's *Physician in Spite of Himself* was represented in her private apartments.

The Courtiers of Alexis.

A man who became a prominent figure during Princess Sophia's regency took part in this performance; this was Prince Galitzin, of whom the Polish envoy, De la Neuville, says that he cherished vast plans of reform; he was of a refined character, and in his mind the necessity of emancipating the peasants, who had been bound to the soil in the last years of the preceding century, already presented itself as an inevitable condition of national prosperity. He can be taken as the precursor of that Russian aristocracy which, a century later, would swarm around the throne of Catherine the Great—refined, intellectual, but idealistic and with no deep roots in practical life.

Another interesting personality is Ordyn Naschokin, a man widely different from Prince Galitzin, and very practical in action; he was the first Russian diplomatist. Involved in the hardest difficulties of the Little Russian and Baltic questions, he gained the esteem of the Swedish and Polish statesmen with whom he had to deal. A passionate champion of foreign ideas, he was

a harsh critic of Muscovite customs, and made numerous enemies in society by his habit of sacrificing personal consideration to public affairs. He was an ardent advocate of a Russian sea and a Russian fleet. After his type were shaped the associates of Peter the Great.

We must not overlook Tzar Alexis' intimate friend, Artamon Matveyev. His house was the gathering place of the intellectual elements of the time; the German suburb enjoyed his warmest sympathies, so that his enemies called him "Father of the Germans;" he had also been the first promoter of the theatrical movement. In his house, one day, Tzar Alexis met a handsome girl, who impressed him with her soft manners and beautiful black eyes; this was the host's pupil, Nathaly Narishkin. The tzar was a widower at that time; she became his wife, and on May 30, 1672, brought into the world a son, who was called Peter, afterward famous as Peter the Great.

Such was the atmosphere in which grew and lived the children of Tzar Alexis. These were the mild and noble Theodor, who ruled during six years after his father; the energetic and ambitious Sophia, who succeeded after Theodor's death, in 1682, in being proclaimed regent in the name of her two brothers; the delicate and feeble-minded John, and Theodor's godchild, little Peter, with the black curly hair.

Peter the Strenuous.

The lad who became the friend and comrade of the artisans of the German suburb soon left childhood be-

hind him. The military tournaments with the children of domestics and boyars are soon transformed; that which was a plaything becomes a well-disciplined regiment; the coachman's son, Alexashka, is the future serene highness; Prince Menshikov, minister of war; and the future field-marshal, Prince Galitzin, is in the ranks of that child-army. The little boats on the pond of the royal garden are too insignificant; arsenals are ransacked; an old boat is found among pieces of armor and household lumber; it is restored and launched on the water; the pond is too small; Peter leaves for the Pereiaslav lake and forgets everything on his favorite element. Now and then he sends a few hasty lines to his mother: "Your son, Peter, abiding in labor, asks for your blessing and wishes to know of your health. As to us, thanks to your prayers, things are all right. The lake is free of ice, and all the vessels, except the big ship, are finished." "Abiding in labor" —from seventeen till the day of his death—that self-applied epithet will never leave him. On September 12, 1689, all play is put an end to; the partisans of Princess Sophia and those of Peter's mother had come to a bloody conflict; the princess regent is deposed and relegated to a convent; Peter and John remain masters. But the invalid John is merely a figure-head; the reign of Peter the Great begins.

Peter's Campaigns.

It is impossible here to represent the proportions and to follow the entire course of his reforms. That which

makes Peter's reforms so difficult to grasp is their simultaneousness; they seem to lack system and plan; everything is put in movement at the same time. One main idea can indeed be traced in every single act, and that is the increase of the country's wealth; all which does not directly aim at that is either a means or a necessary consequence. One of these means was war; it was an expensive process, but the compensations expected were greater than the sacrifices. The campaigns of Peter the Great have a character of their own. It is never for a diplomatic reason or through greed for adjacent territory that they are undertaken; we always find the practical aim at the end. They are not vast, the territories for which he fights—the port of Azov, as entrance to the Black sea, Derbent, on the Caspian, and the shores of the Baltic, the first of these being ceded back to Turkey after the campaign of 1711. And the process of war itself, how different it appears! It quite loses the character of a national calamity. Those healthy, vigorous regiments in newly-adopted foreign uniforms, taught by foreign under-officers, but led by Russian generals, are in search of a foeman worthy of their steel; a defeat is never a disaster; it is another lesson learned, and the profit of the lesson never fails to materialize.

The first campaign against Azov was gained by the Turks. With the energy of a man knowing where his fault lies and how to repair it, Peter rushes into the forests of Varonesh; twenty-six thousand carpenters are set to work, building a fleet, and the tzar presides over them. Between November and the next spring

the task is accomplished; the vessels sent down the Don appear before Azov; the port is taken—the lesson has been of profit.

The first conflict with Charles XII, of Sweden, which opens the famous "Northern war," brings the dreadful defeat of Narva with the loss of the whole artillery—another lesson. Everything is set on foot this time; men, women, monks, priests, work by order of the tzar for the equipment and arming of the soldiers; new foundries work day and night; church bells are melted down; in sixteen months' time three hundred guns are ready. The future field-marshal, Sheremetiev, takes command and marches from success to success; Swedish banners sent to Moscow wave in the Kremlin. Peter leaves for the North; with his new artillery he takes a fortress on the Neva, which, with that rage for German names which then invades the national vocabulary, he calls Schlüsselburg. With sixty cutters he rows down the Neva to explore the mouth of the river. Suddenly three Swedish men-of-war appear; there is a fight; the three vessels are captured; the first naval battle is gained, the dream of Peter's forefathers is fulfilled.

Soon afterward Peter goes ashore; a few wooden houses are rapidly put together; he orders it to be a town, a seaport; he calls it St. Petersburg and leaves for the South; the Turkish frontier requires his presence. But the struggle with Sweden is not finished; another terrible but inevitable conflict had to come; it came on June 27, 1709, near Poltava; the "Northern war" had its culminating point in the southwest. The armies met at four in the morning; at eleven the

Swedes were crushed and put to flight; Charles XII, the Swedish hero, wounded and carried on a litter, just escaped captivity. When, a hundred years later, Napoleon I, with his arrogant belief in his star, shall ask the envoy of Alexander, "What is the shortest way to get to Moscow?" Balashov will answer with courtesy, "There are several ways, your Majesty; Charles XII chose the way of Poltava." From that day the curtain rises before Europe, and Russia enters the field of universal history. But Peter takes the matter from another side: "The opposing army," he writes, "had met the fate of Phaeton. To-day, definitely, a stone has been laid in St. Petersburg's foundation with the help of God." Always the practical end.

Industrial Activity.

Thus war was a means of learning and enriching; but there were also immediate measures directed to the increase of national wealth. Peter not only sets his people in movement, he wakes the soil of the country and shakes the slumbering earth; iron, coal, naphtha —all the natural resources—are simultaneously grasped at in different parts of the country, "in order," says one of his decrees, "that God's blessing should not remain useless under the earth." A system of canals is undertaken by which the Neva is united to the Volga, the Baltic to the Caspian; two hundred and fifty manufactures are established in a few years; privileges of all kinds are granted in order to further commercial enterprises and to allure foreign dealers; but that the

foreign element may not overbalance in the scale of national economy, Russian students are sent abroad; Russians learn from foreigners, but they always keep their rank; they are pupils, but not subordinates. Russian soldiers were trained by German and Swedish under-officers; but the battles in which the Swedes had been defeated were gained by Russian generals. The lad who began his practical education in the German suburb, dazzled by the superiority of Dutch and German carpenters, was an obedient pupil and an enraptured friend of the Swiss Lefort, the bankrupt merchant from Geneva, who related such wonderful stories about foreign countries, and of the Dutchman Timmerman, who was the first to show him the use of the astrolabe.

An Imperial Education.

But Peter goes abroad; he becomes himself a craftsman; he works in the docks of Saardam and Deptford, and when he returns home, with the superiority of a monarch who can with his own hands build a ship even to its slightest detail, his former friends, who had unbounded influence so long as they held his imagination, lose all importance. The sovereign who is so much accused by the so-called national party for his partiality for foreigners, leaves the state of affairs at his death exclusively in Russian hands. Russian students come back, and new schools are founded—always with the same practical purpose. Till this time schools had been a sort of appendix to monasteries; the

instruction given took no account of the exigencies of life; it was the same for everyone, and consisted, in addition to primitive notions of writing and reading, in moral teaching aiming at the salvation of the soul. "But I want schools," exclaims Peter impatiently, in a conversation with Patriarch Hadrian, "schools that shall prepare people for all necessities, for civil and military service, including the arts of building, of medicine." In all elementary schools, under the supervision of the provincial clergy, arithmetic and geometry were introduced. Then came a sort of high school, of the classical type, with Greek and Latin; others with mathematics, German, or French. Moreover, special technical schools were founded; in Moscow, a medical school attached to the hospital and a school of navigation; in St. Petersburg, a naval academy and an engineering school.

The Emperor Peter.

In 1722 the last act of the Northern war was accomplished; it was the peace of Neistadt, by which the whole southern littoral of the Baltic, from St. Petersburg down to the frontier of the Courland duchy and a part of Finland, were ceded to Russia. Peter the Great then made a triumphant entry into the young city which was not yet the capital, but already the favorite of the sovereign, who called it "my paradise." The senators and ministers were waiting with impatience for his return. On the 22d of October, in the Trinity church, in presence of the tzar, the text

of the peace treaty was read to the people; and after the reading, Chancellor Golovkin, at the head of the Senate, advanced, and in the name of the country begged the tzar to accept the title of emperor and "father of the fatherland, for having brought us from non-existence into existence."

Such was the worker; such the work, pictured as they present themselves to posterity; but how did contemporaries accept them? When his immediate collaborators offered him the title of emperor there is evidence to show that they had a keen insight into the significance of events and a great power of synthetical appreciation. But the rest? The great majority hardly understood anything, and it must be admitted that much of the fault lay in the methods with which reforms were carried out, and, in some respects, even in the reforms themselves. The fact that no well-established programme was set before the people left the masses in the dark as to the aim of that which was going on under their eyes. The official gazette, published by Peter's orders, registered facts, spoke of methods, but maintained no system, insisted upon no plan. This absence of well understood purpose deprived the tzar's activity of all creative element. The people saw the destruction of the old order, but the new escaped their comprehension. The reform was practical, it aimed at material prosperity; but it was too practical, it was nothing but practical, and this was the germ of hindrance to its wide acceptance.

In the time of Peter only those few who were already educated, or who were endowed with extraordi-

nary natural gifts, could understand him, and these alone believed in him. The customs, opinions, creeds, of the people were hurt by every innovation. The compulsory shaving, the so-called "German dress," the new chronology beginning with Christ's birth instead of the creation of the world, the new year beginning in January instead of September, the compulsory participation of women in social gayeties—only education could reconcile people to such arbitrary changes; but education is a slow process.

It is easy for us at the beginning of the twentieth century to criticise what Peter the Great was doing at the beginning of the eighteenth. What could he do in the short space of a man's life? How was it possible to educate a grown-up generation? Instead of losing time in educating them, he ordered them to act as if they were educated people. Some obeyed, others grumbled, and there were those who, under simulated obedience, concealed active opposition. During his whole life Peter had to work under the constant threat of hostile elements, creeping out like reptiles from the clefts of the old edifice. And the darkest plot of reaction he found in his own family.

Treason of Alexis.

Alexis, the son of his first wife, Eudoxia Lopouhin, inherited from his mother a hatred of Peter's innovations. From the cell of the convent to which she had been relegated, she never ceased to instigate him; but he needed no instigating. He confesses to the priest

that he hates his father, and often wishes his father were dead. "God will forgive you," answers the priest; "we all wish the same thing." Terrible, tragic is the whisper of this double confession overheard by history. One day the father learns all.

Alexis flees; he is pursued, but he escapes. In Italy, at Naples, in sight of the beautiful bay, he spends his last hour of liberty. He is hunted down and brought back; a supreme court is appointed to judge him; he is condemned to death. "But the condemnation," adds the official history of the time, "could not be carried out, for on that night the tzarevich died in his prison.

Last Days of Peter the Great.

Moral torment and physical exertion had undermined Peter's health. Full-blooded and vigorous, of a preternatural strength, the great worker "abiding in labor" had to succumb to his own work. We have had a glimpse of this work, and have seen that feverish activity, the mere recital of which is enough to take away one's breath. But we cannot form a full idea of the whirlwind of Peter's life. He was always either leaving or returning; from Astrakhan to Archangel, from the Baltic to the Caucasus, he was in all corners of his land, and his continuous writing, his never-ceasing decrees, spreading through the country and penetrating through the slightest details of practical life, made him omnipresent at every hour of his reign. His absences were more terrible than his presence; for they preceded his return, and heaven knows what a return of

Peter the Great meant for his ministers and senators. When seeing him off on one of his campaigns the Senate asked him for his orders. "I told you not to sleep," he answered, "and I repeat, don't sleep, and once again, don't sleep." And all his life he was acting as if people were continually snoring around him; he was constantly wakening them and shaking them up. How did he find time amid this activity for verifying the translations of technical manuals which were being made by his order? He scolds a man for having translated too literally a German manual of fortification: "Enough, if you grasp the sense," he writes; "and then put it into our language, so that it may be read as intelligently as possible." During thirty-six years the whole country was in motion; toward the end people began to feel tired; a sort of relaxation followed Peter's death; the workers took rest, yet the work stood firm—it cannot perish—and this is perhaps the strongest evidence of the enormous proportions of his task, that he made it impossible for the country to turn back.

In November, 1725, Peter was yachting on the Neva, when he saw a boat which had just run aground; he hastened to save the people, spent the whole afternoon in the water, caught cold, and did not recover. In the rush of life he probably seldom thought of death; on his dying bed he asked for pen and paper. He began to write, but the hand obeyed no more. Of all he wrote only two words could be made out: "Give everything." In his funeral oration, Theophan Prokopovich, archbishop of Novgorod, one of the most ardent

adherents of the reform and its untiring commentator in the pulpit, uttered these memorable words: "Though he abandoned us through the destruction of the body, in departing he left us his spirit."

Russian Point of View.

National self-consciousness is a great helper to the observer; more than that, it is, perhaps, the only source from which he can get those elements of knowledge necessary for forming an adequate opinion of a nation. One may read as many foreign books as he pleases about a country; he will not know it, will know scarcely anything about it, until he has read its national books. How often are the Russians asked by foreigners: "Why do you know other nations and pretend that nobody knows you?" To this they exclaim: "Because you are more barbarous than we, whom you accuse of barbarism." But the difference comes from another cause. If Russia knows other nations, it is because she has learned their history from their books, whereas Russia's history was, until recent years, known to other countries only from foreign books. Above all, it is to Russian literature we must look for a true estimate of the national hero, as we take our leave of him.

Catherine the Great.

Whenever men speak of the intellectual or literary progress of Russia in the eighteenth century, they con-

fine themselves almost entirely to the reign of Catherine the Great. The splendor of this showy reign is not the only reason why the name of the empress seems to absorb the century. Peter the Great, standing on the threshold of two centuries, belongs chronologically to both; moreover, he does not embody a period, but marks an historical era. Figures like his root deeper and rise higher than their own time; they are not what is called representative, and it would be an error to apply to individuals who make their time the same term as to those who represent it. In spite of his helpers and contemporary admirers, Peter the Great belongs to some superior region, outside the beaten track of chronological succession; he is not an index of a century, just as an aërolite is no index of geological formation. Thus, in the memory of posterity, he does not monopolize the eighteenth century; he vacates it for his successors. Among these Catherine the Great has no competitors. Her personal talents, the superior qualities of her colleagues, the scale on which she carried on her diplomatic intercourse, a series of successes obtained by the Russian arms by land and sea—all this is enough to make her the central figure of the century.

Her Dual Personality.

The personality of Catherine the Great is of a dual nature—the empress as she was, and the empress as she wanted to be seen. No sovereign ever cared for public opinion as she did. All the resources of her intelligence, her literary talent, the means given by rank and

power, were employed by her for establishing the reputation that she desired to obtain. Her correspondence with Voltaire, Diderot, D'Alembert and other French celebrities, which displays more brightness and good humor than seriousness, was but seeking notoriety. In these spirited letters she was multiplying and spreading her moral portrait—as she would have it known—all over Europe. And, of course, such a portrait was pleasant to look upon. In the gorgeous frame of monarchical splendor, with beautiful parks and palaces in the purest Louis XV style in the background, surrounded with the fame of military exploits; the features of this bright and attractive woman aroused enthusiasm. She was praised abroad; she was exalted at home; she was celebrated in beautiful verses; and as such she was handed down to posterity. The brightness of this portrait throws its light on the whole environment, and communicates to Catherine's reign an exterior splendor that has seldom been surpassed. The empress had the rare fortune of impressing herself on people's minds just as she wanted to be seen. There were, no doubt, many deficiencies under all this dazzling splendor. But, after all, it is the empress as she wanted to be seen that interests us; for it was she who influenced the intellectual movement, who patronized literature, who impressed imaginations and who passed into poetry.

French Influence.

Under Catherine French philosophy pervaded Russian intellectual life, and in this the country underwent

the same influence as the rest of Europe. Frederick the Great welcomed Voltaire to Potsdam; the Academy of Berlin was presided over by Maupertuis; Catherine received Diderot at St. Petersburg, and entertained Grimm at Tsarskoye Selo. In Russia the movement was more exaggerated than elsewhere. Russian military schools were filled with French professors, and rich families engaged French teachers for their children, the empress setting the example. A close intercourse was established between St. Petersburg and Paris; no Russian travelled abroad without paying his respects to Voltaire. In his old age the philosopher was engaged to write the history of Peter the Great, very much to the disgust of Frederick, who exclaimed, when he saw the first volume: "Pray, what is this idea of writing the history of Siberian wolves and bears?"

Sad is the moral aspect which Russian society presents at this period, when people's heads were stuffed with shallow phrases about liberty, equality, fraternity. The inner link between the ideas proclaimed, and those events which gradually led to the great revolution escaped their observation. The empress herself did not at first understand; she continued her philosophical flirtations with the intellectual representatives of an epoch the mere remembrance of which would later make her shudder. Yet she was extremely far-sighted, and had a remarkably keen perception of cause and effect. In the autumn of 1789 she says that Louis XVI will share the end of Charles I. In her letters to Grimm in 1790 she predicts the appearance of a Cæsar in France. A sort of duality creates a contradiction between her

ideas and her acts. The Revolutionary war in America fills her with indignation, and yet she is sorely disappointed when Lafayette is compelled to decline her invitation to accompany her in a tour of the Crimea. On the other hand, Franklin expresses a wish to visit her, and she asks Grimm to dissuade the old man from so long a journey. "I don't like him," she says to her private secretary, Krapovitsky, who, between 1782 and 1793, kept a concise record of his conversations with the empress.

Jostled between love of popularity and dread of revolution, sovereigns like Frederick II, Joseph II and Catherine II, who represented what is called enlightened absolutism, were all double-faced at this time. No wonder that the empress as she wanted to be seen "invites Beaumarchais to bring over to St. Petersburg his *Figaro's Marriage*," which had just been interdicted at Paris, while the empress as she was falls ill and takes to her bed when she learns that the king of France has been executed.

Russian society also was double-faced at this time. Refined courtiers, who knew by heart Voltaire and Rousseau, did not seem to notice the contradiction between the teaching of books and actual life—the great principles proclaiming the rights of man on the one hand and the servitude of the peasants on the other. The translation of idea into action was as yet almost unknown in Russia. The empress, who in many respects stood above her environment, had made attempts, in the first years of her reign, at putting on a solid basis the question of the emancipation of the serfs; but she

had to give it up, for it was in conflict with the interests of those to whom she owed her throne.

Superficial Culture.

Russian culture, though very considerable in a quantitative sense, was at this time extremely superficial. People took only an abstract of philosophy, and one that was unfitted to the soil, a philosophy of brains and not a philosophy of life. It was only after the terrors of the Revolution, and perhaps still more after the invasion of Napoleon in 1812, that French philosophy was made responsible for historical events; and then ideas were exaggerated, those who professed French views being regarded as sympathizers with revolution. Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century Voltaireanism was synonymous with apostasy, and a Voltairean was a man condemned to hell, whom good Christians must avoid. Yet they were not dangerous; for they were merely the survivors of a past which had become innocuous, and soon fell out of fashion. But their memory lived on, and the younger generation was already imbued with the doctrines of Romanticism when old ladies in the provinces were still crossing themselves at the name of Voltaire.

The poets of Catherine's period, however old-fashioned they may seem to us, have their historical importance, and, taken in their own contemporary atmosphere, present a brilliant appearance, well deserving of the fame with which their names were surrounded at the splendid court of the empress. No sovereign,

before or since, took more interest in literature and writers than did Catherine the Great. She was herself a writer of exceptional ability, and at a time when literary work did not constitute an independent career, the special attention granted to literature is of unusual significance.

Lomonosob.

Lomonosov had constituted himself the singer of Peter the Great, and with the pseudo-classical tone of his lyre, the official character thus given to poetry passes over to the next generation. The empress, with her encouraging smile, captivates the heart of the national muse, and becomes not only the centre of poets, but the chief object of their songs. Derjavine, the most brilliant among them, declares in one of his odes that he has no other ambition than to become illustrious through having celebrated her deeds:

> I sang, I sing, and I will sing them.
> A sun, a moon for coming ages,
> Thy glorious image and thy name.
> I will extol; I will exalt thee;
> And through thee become immortal.

A sort of fellowship is established between the empress and the writers. In her comedies she herself sets the example of the satirical tone, and a number of satirical magazines appear. Von Viezin writes his famous dramas, plays by the empress and others are performed on the private stage of the Hermitage palace; a free and healthy laughter resounds at the court of a sover-

eign who used to declare that no great man ever lived who did not possess an inexhaustible fund of gayety. Thus the tendencies of the literature of the time are marked by Catherine herself, the pseudo-classic trumpet proclaiming her glory, and the caustic speech of sarcasm ridiculing the old generation and spurring on the new.

Derjavine.

Among the pseudo-classic group, the first place must unquestionably be assigned to Derjavine. As he claims for himself, he was the first who sang in a pleasing tone, who spoke of God in simplicity of heart, and told the truth to monarchs "smilingly." Compared with his predecessors he had much to recommend him. He condescended to leave those artificial heights where poetry had sought its vocabulary; he dwelt in a lower region than Lomonosov; yet, compared to the next generation, he is still in the clouds. It is not his fault, it is not the fault of literature. At this time all streams of intellectual life moved in artificial channels; intelligences walked on stilts and were actuated by the desire of living up to patterns, not of penetrating into the substance of things; a void separated intellectual interests from the interests of life. Derjavine made attempts at stepping over that vacuum by introducing into his solemn verse satirical strokes of everyday life. In some of his odes we behold the aspect of contemporary society; its luxury, its indolence, its roughness are represented with characteristic strokes, but they do not fill up the void, for they fail to communicate reality to his poetry.

"Derjavine's poetry," says Belinsky, "is a brilliant page in the history of Russian poetry; it is not yet poetry." Galakov, in his *History of Russian Literature*, declares that Derjavine's poems are "poetical annals of Catherine's reign," and this is probably their chief value. His sonorous language, animated with a real, practical breath, was just the instrument suited for the splendor of that court, for the glory of the victories in the Crimea and on the Danube, for the pomp of St. Petersburg society, the pride of the grandees and the military exploits of Souvorov, Roumiantsov and all those who formed what Poushkin called the "glorious brood of Catherine's eagles."

The Hermitage Theatre.

In the private theatre of the Hermitage palace, whose magnificent picture gallery was also started by Catherine, performances, perhaps unique in history, were taking place. On the stage the measures of the government, together with innovations in social life, were criticised and abused by old ladies deploring the good old time, by obscurantist adherents of the past, and by idle youths who would neither learn nor serve; in the hall, on the picturesque amphitheatre of marble seats, the brilliant court surrounding the empress was exulting and applauding. An old lady on the stage is exasperated at these new plays, where "people are portrayed and made fun of." "But why are such plays permitted?" exclaims her interlocutor. "Why, my dear man," says the old lady, "what if those who ought to

forbid them are interested more than any one else?" The empress had good reason to be interested more than any one else, for she was their author.

Portraits were presented on the stage, but they were raised to types and became portraits of customs, not of people; they belonged to literature, and sometimes to politics, but not to gossip. And they were sharply drawn; for Catherine had rare power of observation and knowledge of human nature. Few sovereigns knew their environment as she did. In that crowd of ministers, diplomatists, writers, scientists, which composed her court, she knew every single character. When in her letters she mentions any of them, her few strokes are always to the point; she knows the qualities and weaknesses of every one. Fond of men of talent, she lifted them out of the multitude, she helped their individualization and imposed them upon society. At her court, however numerous the crowd, she recognizes in each his moral physiognomy, his intellectual rank, and gives to each his nickname. They have all been divined, studied and labelled by the empress; she has a different way of talking, a different selection of wits, according to her interlocutor. Her brightness, her versatility, the extent of her knowledge, the inexhaustible gayety she possessed and infused into others can hardly be conceived even from her own letters. "When I used to part from the empress," says Grimm, "I often felt so electrified that for half the night I used to walk up and down in my room." And declares one of her critics, "her comedies are a brilliant tribute to the authority of thought and to the moral sovereignty of

literature." They were never tame or tiresome; and, if sparkling, they never stooped to offend. Her satire was inimitable; keen as a scimeter, it gave no pain in the wounding; and, indeed, its very flash was accompanied with a balm that possessed immediate healing virtue. Her dexterity in handling themes was excelled only by that in handling personages.

Catherine's Dramatic Works.

Though only one of her plays was a decided success, beyond the court circles, Catherine wrote fourteen comedies, in addition to nine opera texts, seven proverbs or short plays, and other writings not in dramatic form. In a letter to Voltaire she speaks of her dramatic works as being weak in plot and ill-sustained in intrigue, but as natural and true in their characterisation. Nor is this eulogy, though it proceeds from the authoress herself, altogether undeserved. Any deficiencies that they may exhibit as works of art are more than atoned for by the liveliness and judgment with which the manners of her epoch are portrayed. "In the composition of my comedies," she writes to a literary friend, "I have taken all my conceptions of character exclusively from my own country, and thus, without quitting home, have found in it alone materials for satire sufficiently abundant for a pen far more practised than I can ever hope to wield." But thus adjuring the traditions of classicism, and by wisely confining the action of her comedies to her own age and land, she has increased, rather than diminished, their interest, and given us

sketches of Russian life in the eighteenth century which for fidelity and completeness will bear comparison with the best productions of Von Viezin.

O Tempora.

The first published of the plays of Catherine II, *O Tempora*, bears on its title page the words, "Composed at Yaroslaff during the terrible visitation of the plague." It was written in 1772. The plot is extremely simple and turns on the love of Milksop for Christina, the granddaughter of Mrs. Devout, whose opposition to a poor match is only overcome by the clever, though rather stagy, manœuvres of Milksop's friend, Sharp. The merit of the piece is in the delineation of its leading characters; Mrs. Devout, Mrs. Marvel and Mrs. Prattle, their Russian names here replaced by English equivalents, explaining, after the manner of the old comedy, their peculiar foibles, hypocrisy, superstition and love of gossip. Mrs. Devout must be admired as the most exemplary of women by all those who believe religion to consist in outward ceremonies and who indulge in long prayers, thinking they shall be heard for their much speaking. "She keeps the fast days strictly, goes to church every morning, takes care to place a taper before the image of her saint on each festival, will not touch a piece of meat all Lent, wears woolen dresses—but, you must know, it is from stinginess—and hates most heartily all who do not observe her rules of life." Nothing but the miraculous will do for Mrs. Marvel, who is especially in-

dignant at the attempt made by modern thinkers to explain the government of the physical world by "laws of nature." "Just so," exclaims Mrs. Devout, as she makes the same complaint which theologians still repeat, "you believe in nothing now. Nature is all in all with you."

But the happiest hit is the adroit manner in which Mrs. Devout turns her long prayers to her own profit. Though of a good family, she is overwhelmed with debts, and accordingly, whenever a creditor is seen approaching, runs off to her private chapel, where, of course, she cannot be disturbed. Once, indeed, a well-timed bribe induced Martha, her maid, to proceed boldly into the chapel and announce the presence of the unwelcome guest, but her reception was not such as to justify a repetition of the rash experiment. "Thou godless imp," shrieked the religious lady, as she threw at Martha her heavily bound prayer-book, "couldst thou not choose a more fitting time? Must thou needs come, like Satan, to tempt me with earthly vanities when my thoughts are fixed on heavenly things and raised above the grovelling cares of this world?"

True to her mission as educational reformer, Catherine has made her comedy the vehicle of exposing the more prominent deficiencies in the then prevailing system of instruction. To teach a woman even the most elementary branches of learning was thought not only to be extravagant, but injurious. "What good is there," asks Mrs. Marvel, "in a girl knowing how to read and write? The less she knows, the less rubbish she will talk." And the worthy dame does not fail to

thank God that her mother made her promise never to take her pen or book in hand. It was against this stolid worship of ignorance that Russian writers of the eighteenth century had to strive, and any sameness that there may be in their satire must be attributed to the obstinacy with which the people clung to their old prejudices against "the new learning," and the reluctance with which they emerged from the dark ages of intellectual sloth.

Mrs. Grumble's Birthday.

But perhaps this ignorance, notwithstanding its grossness, was better than the fripperies which then passed current in the fashionable world for high breeding and good manners. In *Mrs. Grumble's Birthday,* written by Catherine in the same year as *O Tempora,* the affected habits and conversation of the educated classes are broadly caricatured. Olympia, who has just finished her schooling at an establishment where none but daughters of the best families are admitted, and Fierlyfyschoff—which may be translated Weathercock—a type of the dandy of the last century, speak a jargon of their own, half French, half Russian, the use of which has by no means disappeared even at the present day. In the fourth scene of the first act the latter pays a visit to Mrs. Grumble, and arriving late, according to his wont, expresses a fear to Priscilla, the pretty parlor maid, and Anthony, the lackey, that he has kept the dinner waiting. This gives opportunity for the carrying on of a very pretty dialogue:

Fierlyfyschoff.—I fear I am a little late. Mrs. Grumble is already at dinner.

Priscilla.—Not yet, but they are just going to sit down to table.

Fierl.—Truly, this house is admirably managed; one is never late. Admirable, ma foi, admirable. Come when you will, you are always in time.

Prisc.—But what makes you so late? Where have you been? It is not business, I fancy, that has kept you.

Fierl.—Belle demande. Where have I been? A ma toilette, à ma toilette. Where else could one have been at this early hour? Yesterday I lost, the whole night, at cards. Then I went me coucher at six o'clock après minuit, got up at one, and have now such a migraine that I can scarcely tell you how ill I feel. Have you any eau de Luce? I fear I shall fall—I am so weak—hold me up.

Prisc.—Had you not better sit down? Here is a chair.

Fierl.—Sit down there, and I so weak? At least, give me an easy chair.

Prisc.—Perhaps you would fancy a sofa, or shall I fetch a bed?

Fierl.—Ma foi! A good idea! Confoundedly stingy of madame not to have in each room at least one chaise longue. Can't die of fatigue here with anything like grace! Ah, mon Dieu, quel temps, quels gens!

Anthony.—How, die? Are you, then, really ill?

Prisc.—Perhaps you have been too much shaken in the carriage.

Ant.—So, it would be much better for you to ride on horseback.

Fierl.—(Falling back in his seat.) What, I? Mon Dieu! I—to ride on horseback! the mere sight of a man riding fills me with alarm and surprise. How can people hazard their lives and trust their necks to a beast? Cela est bien ignoble! For my part, even when in a carriage, I never let them drive me over a bridge, for fear of an accident, but get out and cross on foot.

Prisc.—I am only surprised that in this cold weather you venture out at all.

Fierl.—True, the climate is detestable, pour nous autres. But every night before going to bed I use the best French pomade. But (looking at Priscilla), ah, diable! ah, ah, ah! you, a young girl, intelligent, too, in the service of a lady, dressed in that vulgar way, ah, ah, ah! fi donc, a light cotton in this horrible weather!

Prisc.—Well, what do you find ridiculous in my dress? I wear what is given me. We are not aristocrats, and no one will give us credit; the tradesmen know well enough that we cannot afford such rich dresses as you nobles wear.

Fierl.—Ma foi, how naïve you are! Do you think, my little dove, I ever pay tradesmen? Never, mon cœur, never, on my honor. I never did pay, never do pay, and never shall pay. Enough for them if they have the honor of writing our names in their greasy books. D'ailleurs, it never has been the custom in our family to pay debts. My dear father never settled a debt in his life, and he lived to a good old age, and I, like a dutiful son, follow his example.

This frivolity and indifference to all the serious purposes of life, which resulted in many cases in a sullen discontent with the efforts made by the government to enlighten the people, is still more strongly exhibited in Mrs. Grumble herself. Foolish, vain and fickle, she believes any story, however absurd, provided only it be directed against the government. Two rakes are anxious to secure the hands of her daughters, Olympia and Christina, in order to repair their shattered fortunes. To win the good opinion of the mother, they are never at a loss in inventing some marvellous tale, designed to expose the nefarious character of the empress and her chief advisers. It is with this object they persuade her "that in a few months a law will be promulgated forbidding any marriage for a space of ten years." In despair, lest her daughters

should be left on her hands, she readily gives her consent and is only anxious that the wedding should take place without delay. Of course, after the manner of comedies, all ends happily. The cheat is discovered, and the daughters are united to a worthy pair, whose love, for five acts, has been thwarted in every possible way.

The other dramatic works of Catherine need not be noticed at length. One of them, entitled *A Pretty Basketful of Linen*, is a translation, or rather an adaptation, of Shakespeare's *Merry Wives of Windsor*. The personages all bear Russian names, and our old friend Falstaff is transformed into Polcadoff, or Halftun. The aim of the piece is to satirize that inordinate love of everything French, which then, as now, so widely prevailed among the upper classes of Russian society. Like Polcadoff, they live more abroad than they do at home; but their experiences of foreign life are mostly confined to acquaintance with actresses of very doubtful repute, and the sole result of their travels is that they are able to introduce at all times and on all occasions into their conversation references to how things are managed "chez nous à Paris."

Rurick.

Nor is this the only play in which Catherine has taken Shakespeare for her guide. The tragedy of *Rurick*, as its title page informs us, is "modelled on the historical plays of Shakespeare without observing the ordinary rules of the classical drama." Critics have

pointed out how close a resemblance there is between the sentiments put in the mouth of Rurick and the maxims on education and government laid down by Catherine herself in the "Royal Instructions." The main purpose of the piece is to glorify Rurick, Russia's first grand-duke, to whom are ascribed all those virtues which were once supposed to be the inalienable attributes of kingship. Gostomysl, prince of Novgorod, feeling that his days were drawing to a close, and conscious of the perils that threaten the commonwealth, advises the elders of the people to choose Rurick, a Varangian chieftain, as his successor. This they do; but a few years later Vadim, the late prince's grandson, heads a revolt against the new ruler, by whom he is first conquered and then freely pardoned. But, spite of its wholesome morality, it must be confessed that the drama is dull; there is too much sermonizing and too little action, and the excellencies of the hero are enforced with such persistency and at such great length that we wish he had not been, on the stage at least, so faultless in character.

Catherine's Work.

In the discussion of Catherine's plays it must have been observed that her place in dramatic literature is one of eminence, rather because she dared to do than because of the manner of doing. Herself eminent, there would naturally be an attractiveness, as well as importance, about her works over and above their intrinsic merits. She doubtless felt this and acted upon

it. Seeking none the less to acquire and deserve literary distinction, striving nobly to disarm criticism, the real motive of her adventure must be sought, nevertheless, in the grand opportunity of place and time she found at her disposal. She knew thoroughly the need of her country for literary exaltation, how abject it was in its foreign imitations, how fruitless seemed the detached and spasmodic efforts of the mere individual writers. With an intuitive perception of real conditions, with a quick sympathy and popular instinct, with a national pride far deeper than throne or regal estate, she firmly grasped a desperate situation, and made herself such a part of it as to quite redeem it, or, at least, to set in active motion the forces needed for redemption. There was a daring, a sublimity, in her effort which merited the success that followed. Even if not a single play of her's had deserved survival, even if she had set no dramatic style, her people could not fail to hail that spirit of hardy determination which caused her, in their own behalf, to join with her mission of state that even higher and nobler mission of social and mental amelioration. Keeping this in view, the critic of Catherine's writings may safely overlook their defects and treat them as invaluable accessories of an ambition which gives her a grand historic footing.

III.

Von Viezin and Krilof.

The comedies of Von Viezin, like the satires of Kantemier, were mainly directed against ignorant admirers of the past, who obstinately clung to the life and customs of their forefathers, and resisted every change and reform simply because they were innovations. Especially directed against these false notions are the two great comedies of Von Viezin, the aim of which is to expose the vicious superficialities which too often formed the essence of Russian instruction.

Denis Ivanovitch Von Viezin, as his surname testifies, was of German origin, but his family had been settled in Russia from an early period. He was born in the year 1744, and, as a boy, entered the then newly opened Moscow gymnasium.

Education.

If we may believe the account Denis gives us of the gymnasium in his *Life Confessions,* he could not have learned very much while there. The mathematical master drank himself to death, and the Latin tutor

seldom or never made his appearance. "On the day before the examination, our Latin master came, after an absence of several months, wearing a coat on which there were five, and a waistcoat with four large brass buttons. A little surprised at his strange costume, I asked why he dressed so queerly. 'My buttons seem to you ridiculous,' he answered, 'but they will prove your salvation and also prove my reputation; for the buttons on the coat represent the five declensions, and those on the waistcoat the four conjugations. So,' he continued, striking the table with his hand, 'please listen to what I say. When to-morrow you are asked what declension any substantive is, notice which of my coat buttons I touch. If, for example, it is the second from the top, answer boldly the second declension. And if they bother you about the verbs, keep your eye sharp on my waistcoat and you will make no mistakes.' " Owing to this ingenious forethought on the part of the master, all went off satisfactorily. But a like success did not attend the next day's examination in geography, every kind of an answer but the right one being given about the sources of the Volga, Van Viezin frankly replying that he did not know. This outspoken confession of ignorance apparently pleased the examiners; for he obtained the gold medal, and in 1758 was elected to a crown exhibition, and studied for the next two years at St. Petersburg.

During his residence in the capital Denis made the acquaintance of Lomonosov, and also for the first time in his life visited a theatre. "It would be difficult," he writes, "to describe the impression which this perform-

ance produced on me; and though the comedy I saw was terribly stupid, I then regarded it as a work of the highest art, and nearly went mad with joy when I learned that some of the actors were in the habit of visiting the house of my uncle, with whom I lived." It was thus that he became friendly with Volkoff and some of the other actors. On his return to Moscow he translated several Latin and French books, among which may be mentioned Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Voltaire's *Alzire*. His qualities for the task of translation, it must be confessed, were not of the highest, and the critics were not slow to amuse themselves with his blunders, as where he confuses "sabre" and "sable," and translated it by a Russian word equivalent to "sand."

Literary Career.

Having completed his university career, Von Viezin entered the Foreign Office, and employed his leisure time in the composition of his first comedy, *The Brigadier*, which was produced with great success in 1766. A few years later he married Mme. Khlopova, a rich widow; but the union brought him little happiness, though his wife's fortune enabled him to travel abroad. In his letters written from Paris to his sister and to Count Panin he has described the impressions of his journey; but they are characterised by a strange narrowness of view, and men like Voltaire, Rousseau and Diderot are judged with an assurance of superiority as amusing as it is ill-placed. During the interval between his first and second visits to France he wrote *The Minor*,

which achieved even a greater success than his earlier comedy. It was in reference to this play that Potemkin employed the celebrated phrase, "Die, Denis, or write no more comedies." His later productions are both deficient in humor and weak in construction.

Last Years.

During the latter years of his life Von Viezin suffered from a paralytic stroke, with which he was seized in 1785, and which deprived him of the free use of his tongue and left side. His physical sufferings tended to strengthen his natural disposition to devotism; and a story is told of his addressing the students of Moscow university in these words: "Children, let it be a warning to you; I am punished for my free thinking. Do not offend God in either word or thought." Some of his biographers have been pleased to draw an edifying moral from this story; but there is something sad and piteous in the spectacle of the old decrepit comedian ignoring the healthier teaching of his earlier years, and so far overcome by bodily pain and weakness as to condemn the use of that reason for the full and free cultivation of which it had once been his mission to plead. He died at St. Petersburg in 1792, his last comedy being *The Choice of a Tutor.*

Brigadier.

Von Viezin's *Brigadier,* though weak in plot and faulty in construction, is the earliest comedy of Russian

life. The characters are symmetrically arranged in two opposing groups, like the black and white pieces on a chess-board. The catastrophe is not led up to, nor does the play possess that unity of action which is necessary to retain our interest in its leading incidents. The personages come on, and go off the stage at the will of the writer, but neither their entrances nor their exits contribute in any way to the development of the action. There is, in truth, no close connection between the fundamental idea and the story of the piece. Sophia, the daughter of a counsellor of state, is hindered from conferring her hand on Godlove, the object of her affection, by the opposition of her parents, who are bent on marrying her to Ivan, the son of a brigadier. The timely discovery of a close intimacy that has long existed between Ivan and the mother of Sophia releases the heroine from the necessity of sacrificing her happiness to the caprices of her parents, and true love, as it ever should be, is crowned with victory.

But the plot of the comedy is too insignificant and of too light a construction to support the idea of which it is intended to be the exponent. The moral occupies too prominent a place, and, instead of being freely developed from the conduct of the principal personages, overrides the whole action of the piece. There is an unwholesome amount of preaching, and the sententious utterances of Godlove and Sophia merely express the opinions of the author. They might be entirely struck out of the play without doing any injury whatever to the movement and development of its plot. Their lessons should have been taught in action and not put into

the form of aphorisms. Von Viezin has not given a picture of life, but rather a satirical exposure of contemporary ignorance and immorality.

The Minor.

In *The Minor* we have a sketch of the provinces in Russia, such as they were in the eighteenth century, drawn with great vivacity and humor. The names of many of its characters have long been popularly adopted as typical appellations. Noble children, in spite of numerous enactments which peremptorily deprived them of the right to serve in any military or civil department of the empire, unless they first passed a satisfactory examination, were then brought up in ignorance. All serious instruction was considered to be unfitting their high rank; and if they learned anything it was because, like the mother of Metrophanes, their parents had been told that a little knowledge would be useful to their children when they came to serve, and that, of late, officials had begun to regard those of their subordinates who knew nothing as "fools and incumbrances." Accordingly, persons occupying a menial position on the estate, and who were not too proud to be ordered about, were entrusted with their education; the pupils were allowed to learn just as little as they chose; and, to quote the words of one of the characters in the play, "after fifteen years of such training, instead of one boor you had two, the old tutor and the young squire."

At the moment when we first make the acquaintance of Metrophanes he is suffering from a severe fit of in-

digestion, brought on by overfeeding the night before. In reply to his mother's anxious inquiries as to what ails him, the artless youth informs her that, during the night, he had seen most frightful figures in a dream.

Mrs. Booby.—And what horrid figures, dear Metrophanes?

Metrophanes.—Why, you, mother, and father, there.

Mrs. Booby.—Why, how was that?

Metroph.—I had scarcely fallen asleep when I thought I saw you, mamma, walloping papa.

Mrs. Booby.—(Aside.) Ah, heavens! the dream told him true.

Metroph.—And I awoke, crying for pity.

Mrs. Booby.—Pity, and for whom, pray?

Metroph.—For you, mamma; you were so tired with beating papa.

Mrs. Booby.—Embrace me, darling of my heart; you are my true son, my only joy.

The education of this hopeful has been such as we might expect from the knowledge and position of his tutors—Cipher, a disbanded soldier, and Cheek, who had formerly been a coachman at Moscow, but, having lost his place through drunkenness, had migrated into the country and set up in the teaching line. Metrophanes has learned, thanks to the care of these worthies, "all the sciences," as his mother fondly assures Mr. Equity, when that gentleman proposes to examine her son; and if he proves to be rather ignorant in geography, she consoles herself with the thought that it is not necessary for noblemen to know where places are, since "that is the duty of their coachman." And, in truth, why all this bother about education? The history of her own family has taught her that people "can and do

live without learning. My deceased father was fifteen years captain in the army and died a captain; and though he could neither read nor write, he still contrived to lay aside a good sum of money." She is therefore not only ignorant, but vain of her ignorance; and conceited stupidity has never been more humorously sketched than in the scene where, disbelieving her ward's protestation that a letter she has just received came from her uncle, and suspecting it has been written by some lover, she is asked to read it for herself, she replies: "I read it? No, miss, I thank God that I have not been brought up like yourself. I can receive a letter, but I have inferiors to read it;" whereupon she turns to her husband and orders him to spell out the mysterious missive. In her bearing to such creatures as her husband, as to all whom she counts beneath her, and particularly to her servants, she is harsh and heartless, and regards it as an impertinence should any of her menials fall ill, and for that reason claim a temporary exemption from work.

Mrs. Booby.—Where is Paulina?

Eremievna.—Caught the fever, madam; obliged to keep her bed since morning.

Mrs. Booby.—Keep her bed, the beast! Keep her bed! As if she were a born lady!

Eremievna.—She is in a burning heat, madam; wanders in her talk and is quite delirious.

Mrs. Booby.—Wanders in her talk! delirious, the beast! Wanders in her talk, delirious! Just as if she were a born lady!

A woman of her character is not likely to allow poor Sophia, the ward entrusted to her care, to have her

own way, and disposes of her hand to a certain Mr. Brute, without for one moment imagining that her commands will be called into question. Brute's father, like Dryden's MacFlecknoe, "was blest with issue of large increase," and the family is so prolific that the race is never likely to die out. His son is brutal and boorish by nature, sunk to a level with the animals in his fields, and utterly deprived of every feeling, unless it be a doting partiality for pigs. And if he allows himself to be entrapped as a suitor for Mrs. Booby's ward, it is not the beauty and virtues of Sophia that attract him, for he has neither sufficient wit nor intelligence to recognise them, but the thought that, by marrying her, he will become master of her estate, which is renowned for its rare and rich breed of swine.

Mrs. Booby.—But, does the girl really please you so much?

Brute.—No, it is not the girl I care for.

Mrs. Booby.—How is it, then? Is it because her estate joins yours?

Brute.—No; it is not the estate, either; it is for what the estate breeds, and for which I have an unconquerable passion.

Mrs. Booby.—And, pray, what is that, my friend?

Brute.—I love swine, madam; and in this district, believe me, there are swine so fat and large that you won't find one of them that is not taller than any of us, when it stands upon its hind legs.

Throughout the whole comedy the character of Mrs. Booby is so artistically drawn that in its delineation Von Viezin ceases to be the mere satirist that he generally is, nor do we remark in it those exaggerations, ill-placed witticisms and imperfect conception of human nature, which too frequently disfigure his portraits.

However repulsive the woman may be, we can never cease to be interested in her; and we are not sure that, when, through the interference of Equity as commissioner from the government, the entire household is put under the tutelage of the crown, we do not pity the deposed tyrant, whom the veriest slaves that had hitherto trembled at her lightest word, now mock and jeer in the hour of her shame and defeat. We feel for the mother, as she turns to Metrophanes—the darling whom she has fondled and in whom she has trusted to find a refuge from her bitter humiliation—with the yearning cry, "You alone remain to me, my heart's joy, my own Metrophanes," only to be repulsed with the petulant remonstrance, "O, let me alone, mother, and have done with that hugging!" And this is the end of all her foolish idolatry; the one object of her affection, the only being that has ever touched her heart and aroused within her the better feelings of her nature, throws her off, now that she can no longer pamper his selfishness and satisfy his every caprice. The base sordidness of the creature she has made her god is revealed; the poor woman sees how terribly she has been deceived; and, conscious that there is none in the whole world to whom she can cling, or who will show her the least bit of pity or love, she falls broken-hearted and senseless to the ground.

In the comedies, as, indeed, in all the writings of Von Viezin, we perceive the high and lofty aim with which their author was inspired. Their very defects only serve to bring out still more distinctly their purpose and intention. The speeches of the serious char-

acters in the play appear to us to be dull and commonplace, as in reality they generally are; but these sententious utterances, though they have become the truisms of a later age, possessed a novelty of meaning when these comedies were written. They interpret and reflect the aspirations of the better spirits of the age, who, instead of fostering the material interests of the empire, sought to inculcate those principles of truth, justice and mutual tolerance, by the practice of which the happiness and dignity of citizens could be insured. It is for this reason that, even if their literary value were much less than it really is, the comedies of Von Viezin would still deserve the favor that has been accorded them, inasmuch as they form landmarks in the history of Russian social reforms.

By the writings of Kantemier and Von Viezin, by Karamsin's *Letters of a Russian Traveller* and Jukovsky's numerous adaptations from the poets of Germany and England, the literature of Russia was greatly enlarged and effectually relieved from the subservience to the pseudo-classicists of France which characterised its earlier stages. But for its full development it was necessary that it should be made free from all foreign tutelage and become, through the employment of the common, ordinary language of the people, the exponent of national faith, habits and traditions. This, the last and most difficult step in its progress toward self-dependence, was made by Krilov, who of all Russian writers is, perhaps, the best-known to foreign readers, owing to the admirable translations of his *Fables*, published in French by Bougeault and in Eng-

lish by Ralston, and read with delight among all classes wherever they have been produced.

Krílob's Youth.

Ivan Andreevitch Krilov was born at Moscow in 1768, or perhaps 1764. His first years were passed at Orenberg, where his father was engaged in active service against Pougatcheff and his partisans; but when the rebellion was completely crushed the family removed to Tver, where they resided till the death of his father, in 1780. Though completely illiterate herself, his mother took care that her son should receive such education as the provincial town to which the family removed could afford, and the boy's love for reading supplied the defects of his school instruction. Many of his leisure hours, we are told, were passed in strolling about the markets and wharves of the town, on his return from which he would amuse his comrades and friends by relating, in the genuine idiomatic language of the people, some of the humorous scenes he had witnessed; and these pastimes may be regarded as the original source of that nationality in style and diction which he afterward displayed in his sketches of popular life.

Drama and Journalism.

The death of her husband caused Krilov's mother to remove with her son to St. Petersburg, where, after many rebuffs, he succeeded in inducing a publisher to print a comic opera, which he had written during his

residence at Tver. This, his first literary production, was soon followed by two tragedies, *Philomel* and *Cleopatra*, but none of the three met with success, nor did they deserve it; for the opera was dull, and the tragedies are written in that false, declamatory style which Krilov himself, some years later, sharply ridiculed in his burlesque-drama *Prince Trumps*. In 1788 Krilov's mother died, and obliged, from the scantiness of his income, to seek some profession, he resolved to devote himself exclusively to the theatre and to journalism. But neither his journals nor his comedies brought him much profit, the list of subscribers to the former never exceeding two hundred names.

It was probably his ill success as a journalist and dramatist that induced Krilov, in 1797, to accept the appointment of Russian tutor to the children of Prince Galitzin. The prince, once a special favorite with the emperor Paul, had fallen into disgrace for having presumed to speak disrespectfully of a certain courtesan and was ordered to live, during his royal master's pleasure, on his estate in the government of Kiev. It was here that his biographer Wiegel, then a boy, first became acquainted with Krilov, of whose strange, rough manners and disposition he has given us a very faithful, if not a flattering description. "In his gait and conduct," he tells us, "in his figure and corpulence, as well as in his speech, there was something bearish: he was then more active than in later years, but even at that time he was noted for his indolence, untidiness and gluttony. But in spite of his uncouthness he was richly endowed with nearly every talent and capacity

and was already a fair poet, an excellent musician and a good mathematician. Although so lethargic by nature, he was perfect as a tutor. Our lessons were almost entirely of a conversational character; he possessed the faculty of awakening the curiosity of his pupils, encouraged them to ask questions and answered them in that clear, homely, idiomatic language which he employed in his fables; and I must confess that I owe a large portion of whatever knowledge I possess to his wise system of tuition."

A Writer of Fables.

After the coronation of Alexander I, Prince Galitzin was allowed to return to the capital, and being appointed military governor of one of the Baltic provinces, offered Krilov a place in his chancery; but the man of letters soon tired of it and returned to St. Petersburg. He wrote a few more pieces for the theatre, one of which, *The Fashionable Lady*, achieved considerable success; but having shown two or three of his fables to his friend Demetrieff, and receiving his warm approval, he was induced to write more, and in 1809 a small volume, containing twenty-three fables, was published. The first was the *Oak and the Reed*, a translation of La Fontaine's *Le Chêne et le Roseau*, but to each edition fresh stories were added, the last, published during his lifetime in 1843, containing 198 fables. Of these, only thirty-seven were translated or adapted from foreign authors, the remainder being entirely of his own invention. Most of them were written

between 1806 and 1818, after which Krilov wrote but little and rarely. When asked on one occasion by a lady why he composed so little, he replied: "I would much rather that people grumbled because I do not write than that they should ask why I go on writing."

In 1812 he was appointed one of the assistants in the imperial public library, a post which he held for nearly twenty years. "From this period," writes Pletneff in his interesting biography of Krilov, "began a new era in the life of our poet, and up to 1841, the year in which he resigned his office, he led an easy, quiet, monotonous kind of existence, making no change in his daily habits, literary occupations or even in his lodging. Except when he went to the library, where his duties were extremely light and easy, or to dine at the English club and play at cards, or oftener doze over a newspaper, he rarely quitted home, and took no share in active public life. From mere ennui he now and then wrote a new fable, but spent most of his leisure hours in reading trumpery romances, generally old ones, and these he read, not for the sake of obtaining any new ideas, but simply to kill time."

The services which Krilov had rendered to the literature of his country were not forgotten, though he lived thus secluded from the world; for with that kindly generosity which has always distinguished the relations between the government of Russia and her chief literary men, care was taken that the last years of his life should be passed in competence and ease. Not only was he allowed to keep his salary after he had resigned his post as librarian, but a pension on

an unusually liberal scale was granted him. When some ill-disposed persons made the tzar acquainted with Krilov's unfortunate passion for gambling, Nicholas significantly replied: "I do not care about Krilov wasting the money given him, but I should be very sorry were he to waste the talents with which God has endowed him." He died in 1844, aged eighty.

"Krilov was born to us only in his fortieth year," writes Pletneff, wishing us to understand that it was not till he commenced writing fables that he discovered his real and true vocation. But the criticism can only be accepted in part; nor is it just to make such a distinction between his earlier and later literary labors. Krilov was a fabulist even before he composed his first fable. Many of his satirical papers, published in the three journals which he edited, are really apologues in form, directed against the same vices and failings which in his fables he afterward attacked in a similar spirit, though in a more artistic and finished style. There is, consequently, an intimate connection between these two periods of his career, and Krilov, when he listened to the advice of his friend, Demetrieff, and resolved to write henceforth nothing but fables, did not abandon his old sphere for a new one, but continued the career of satirist, which he had already adopted, as being most natural to his genius.

Story of Cahib.

The happiest and most amusing of Krilov's satirical papers are, perhaps, his *Story of Cahib* and his *Pane-*

gyric in Memory of My Grandfather. Cahib was a mighty sovereign and, of course, renowned for his wisdom, though "he never read or consulted a book, since books are seldom written by caliphs," and it would have been beneath his dignity to learn from any of lower rank than himself. He patronized literature and science, but in a judicious way; for, by occasionally hanging a few of the learned men of his country, he took care that their number should never become dangerously great: "since they are like candles; let a moderate number burn, and a pleasant light is provided; but have too many, and there is danger of fire." His palace was furnished with every luxury, and among other curiosities could boast of a small but unique collection of apes, which had been trained to bow and grimace with such elegance that many of the nobility, in their eagerness to learn graceful manners, did their best to imitate these clever animals, and succeeded so well that it was difficult to say which made the best courtiers, they or the apes.

Naturally, Cahib had his paid poets, who never failed to turn their verses to good account. One of them, indeed, once wrote a glowing ode in honor of a certain vizier, but when he came to pay his poetical tribute of homage, was informed that the minister had been beheaded early that morning, whereupon he immediately changed the title and dedicated it to his late patron's enemy and successor; "for odes," as he slyly remarked to a friend, "are like silk stockings, and can be stretched to fit any foot."

In every respect Cahib was the happiest of rulers,

and no sovereign could boast of ministers more devoted or less disposed to question the wisdom of his decisions, or contravene any of his fancies or caprices. And the means with which he contrived to surround himself with such pliant and faithful servants were as simple as they were effectual. He did not fail to assemble them on stated occasions in solemn council, and invariably commenced their deliberations by informing them what line of policy he wished to pursue, and then solicited their advice by addressing them in a speech to the following purport: "Gentlemen, if any one of you desires to express his views on the matter, he is at liberty to speak freely and without restraint, having first received fifty stripes, after which we shall be most happy to listen to what he has to say." In this way the wise Cahib escaped an immense amount of palaver, secured the unanimity of his ministers and never experienced the annoyance of hearing opinions that were contrary to his own.

In the *Panegyric in Memory of My Grandfather* Krilov gives us a sketch of a noble squire, such as he was in the days when he reigned supreme on his estate, and there was no one to question or dispute his authority. If one were to visit his estate, and see the hungry faces of the peasants huddled together in their filthy hovels, he might be tempted to imagine there was famine in the country, and that for "miles round it would be impossible to find a crust of bread or a consumptive fowl;" but all fears of being starved would be dispelled the first time he sat down to table and observed how it was loaded with the most abundant

and sumptuous fare. The grandfather could boast of a long line of noble ancestors, who, indeed, in various ways made themselves so illustrious "that it was quite superfluous on his part, or for a whole generation of descendants, to trouble themselves with doing anything for their country." When a child his father gave him a spaniel, and the young noble began to amuse himself by pinching its ears, on which the animal turned round and bit his hand. "My dear child," remonstrated the father, when the boy ran to him shrieking, "have you, then, so few serfs under you? You can pinch, scratch or bite them with impunity, but dogs are such stupid brutes that they will not be hurt without biting in revenge."

Letters from Below.

The *Letters From Below* consist of a series of epistles received by the wise magician Malicoulmuk from certain friendly gnomes, and refer principally to the sad disorders that had arisen in the kingdom of Pluto, through the ill-advised introduction of French manners and fashions by the light-minded Proserpine. The satire is, for the most part, against the education then generally given to children of the nobility, which imparted to them the bare superficialities of European civilization, and not only failed to make them enlightened members of society, but deprived them of all the better traits in the Russian national character. A contempt of their own country, a disregard for its customs, a neglect of its language, a feverish pursuit of the

vainest and emptiest of pleasures and a misconception of the responsibilities imposed upon them by their birth and position were the miserable results of the education they received at the hands of foreign adventurers, who then, as now, too often filled the place of teachers, and whose antecedents perhaps qualified them to fulfill the duties of grooms and lackeys, but rendered them altogether unfit for tutors.

Moral Teachings and Style.

The larger number of Krilov's fables are directed against the ordinary failings of mankind, as selfishness, envy and intemperance. The moral lessons they teach are set forth without pedantry, and instead of aping an ideal beyond the reach of ordinary men, his estimate of good and evil is invariably based on the common-sense standard of the individual and the general utility of a virtuous and temperate life. The easy, familiar language in which they are couched is one of their greatest charms; the most popular and idiomatic diction is constantly used, and it is very seldom that any attempt is made at what is called fine writing. His success was as rapid as it has been enduring. The Academy of Sciences admitted him to membership, and bestowed on him the same gold medal that was accorded to Karamzin. In 1838 a great festival was held to celebrate the jubilee of his first appearance as an author. Before his death about 77,000 copies of his *Fables* had been sold in Russia, and numerous translations made.

IV.

Pushkin.

Alexander Sergeivitch Pushkin, the most celebrated of all Russian poets, was born in Moscow on May 26th, 1799. In more than one poem Pushkin expressed his pride at being able to count among his ancestors men of high repute in the history of his country. Perhaps the most celebrated of them was Gabriel Gregorovitch Pushkin, who espoused the cause of Demetrius the Pretender, and accordingly plays an important part in the poet's historical tragedy, *Boris Godunoff*. His mother, Nadejda, a woman of rare intellectual attainments, was the granddaughter of Abraham Petrovitch Hannibal, a favorite negro enrolled by Peter the Great.

Pushkin's father had adopted a military career while young, but had no particular liking for the service and often absented himself from duty for the more agreeable society of some reigning St. Petersburg beauty. His handsome person, easy manners, and lively conversation made him a universal favorite. His indifference to the requirements of military order finally led to his retirement from the service.

Alexander's boyhood was spent at Zacharino, a village lying south of Moscow, and intimately connected

with the history of Boris Godunoff. Timid to a fault, and little disposed to games requiring activity, he found his greatest pleasure in reading in his father's library. His education was of a kind which prevailed among the wealthier classes of Russian society. French was the language constantly spoken in the family, and it was with French literature that he first became acquainted. He was particularly fond of Molière, and being endowed with an excellent memory learned many of his comedies. The perusal of La Fontaine induced him to write a series of fables, and the *Henriade* of Voltaire suggested a poem in six cantos. But his imitation of the *Henriade*, entitled *La Tolyade*, from its hero, is rather a mock heroic, describing in light and easy verse a civil war, supposed to be waged between different dwarf tribes in the time of Dagobert. By his uncle Vassily's advice the tyro commenced studying Russian literature, his taste for which was greatly strengthened by hearing Karamsin read some of his stories and Dmitrieff repeat some of his fables. These writers, and also the poets, Jukovsky and Batushkoff, were frequent visitors at his father's house; and Alexander was an attentive listener to their conversation. In one of the class-rooms he constructed a kind of movable stage, on which he would perform original comedies, being himself author and actor, while his sister Olga was the audience.

Education.

As might be expected, the time devoted to his theatre considerably interfered with the proper occupations of

the school-room, although the best tutors were engaged to superintend his education. Next to his sister, for whom he ever entertained the warmest love, and to whom the first of his poetical compositions, written when he was fifteen years old, was dedicated, Pushkin's best friend was his aged nurse Irene. Born on the family estate, she remained in their service until death, and more than once refused to accept the freedom offered in recognition of her fidelity. To the last she watched over her child, as she liked to call him, with kindly forbearance toward his wild follies. "I have had a mass said for your health," she writes on one occasion; "live, my darling, a good life, and never do anything to make you ashamed of yourself." Innumerable were the popular stories she could tell him, and Pushkin was indebted to her for his first acquaintance with the national songs and traditions of his country. She enabled him to support, with something like indifference, the weariness of his banishment from St. Petersburg in 1825, as, during the dull winter evenings, she related to him cherished stories, which Pushkin afterward put into verse. To her also he read his principal poems before submitting them to public judgment. "Let other poets read to whom they will their compositions," he writes in his *Evjenie Oneguin*, "I will read the fruits of my fancy and meditation to none save my nurse, the darling of my youth."

In 1811 an imperial lyceum was opened at Tsarskoe Selo, about twenty miles from St. Petersburg, and an intimate friend of the Pushkins was appointed its first director. The number of pupils was limited to thirty, and each candidate was required to pass an entrance ex-

amination in religion, four modern languages, of which English was one, and the sciences. Pushkin entered the new college, but he was not more industrious at this school than he had been at home. So lax was the discipline that one of the professors used to give up his room to his favorite pupils, who would assemble there at night, and to "the clinking of glasses and beer tankards, sing love songs and recite ribald poems." But however unsatisfactory his progress in learning, the years Pushkin spent at the lyceum were happy ones. His early shyness had departed, and his ready wit and alacrity for mischief rendered him popular among his schoolfellows. The nickname of M. French was given him for his irritable and fiery temperament, so different from the easy phlegmatic disposition of the typical Russian, which, throughout his life, betrayed his semi-African origin.

Pushkin and his friend, Delvig, to whom he was warmly attached, became the acknowledged chiefs in the literary circles of the lyceum students, established a manuscript journal called the *Lyceum Sage*, and were the chief contributors to its pages. Pushkin now turned his attention to the literature of Germany, but so little did his genial nature sympathize with the gloomy mysticism of Klopstock that his taste for French reading was the more confirmed. It was not until 1814 that he wrote, as his first composition in Russian, some verses addressed to his sister. They were not printed until after his death, but in the July number for the same year of the *Russian Messenger* appeared Pushkin's earliest published piece, "To a Friend Poet." From

that time his contributions to Russian journals were frequent. Owing to their graceful style and natural feeling they attracted attention, and Pushkin was encouraged to cultivate his poetical talents.

Derjavine's Blessing.

Years later, when Pushkin's fame was fully established, he was not slow to acknowledge the spur which the praise of Derjavine had given to the development of his genius. Prince Serge Wolkonsky thus tells the story of their meeting: "One day in 1815, in the lyceum of Tsarskoe Selo, great excitement reigned among the pupils. Old Derjavine was coming to assist at the examination. At the appointed time the venerable poet made his appearance, white-haired and bent under his seventy-two years. He nearly slept from weakness until the examination in Russian literature began; then he was wide awake. The pupils were declaiming his poems; his eyes became bright, his face was illuminated, he was transfigured. A youth steps forth with curly hair, thick lips, and eyes like living coals. He is introduced as a young poet, and is asked to recite some of his verses.

" 'I told my reminiscences,' he writes later, 'standing within two paces from Derjavine. I cannot describe the state of my soul when I came to the verse where I mention Derjavine's name. My boyish voice resounded, my heart was beating in wild ecstasy. I do not remember how I finished or where I fled. Derjavine was transported; he called for me and wanted to embrace me.'

"'My time has come to an end,' said the great poet a few days afterward; 'another Derjavine shall reveal himself to the world, one who on the school-bench has surpassed all other poets.' Before he descended to the grave he gave the boy his blessing, and thus did Alexander Pushkin enter on his career"—a brief one, to be sure, but full of splendor.

Rouslan and Ludmiela.

The publication, in 1820, of *Rouslan and Ludmiela*, Pushkin's first poem of any considerable length, provoked a literary controversy of great intensity and bitterness. The reading public of Russia became divided into two hostile camps, and it would be difficult to determine which side displayed the greater zeal. The admirers of past traditions were, like Dmitrieff, offended at the poet's selection of a fantastic story, such as the mysterious disappearance of Vladimir's daughter on the night of her marriage with the brave Rouslan, and condemned as low and unbecoming poetic dignity the employment of such expressions as "our glorious Russian bath" or "tickling his nostrils with a spear." But the novelty of the form of the poem; its light, easy, half earnest, half mocking style; the youthful enthusiasm thrown over its brilliant episodical descriptions; the happy, if incongruous, medley of the thoughts and diction of heathen days with the ideas and conceptions of our own age; and above all, the thoroughly national tone of the narrative ensured it a hearty welcome at the hands of those who were indifferent to the judgment

of learned critics, but felt instinctively that the poem, to use Pushkin's own expression, "breathes of Russia."

At the time when Pushkin commenced his literary career it was a dangerous thing for authors to obtain celebrity of any kind; they were expected never to transgress the limits of a harmless mediocrity. The censorship, which at the best is an insult and a sore hindrance to literature, was then exercised with a harshness and caprice that rendered it impossible for the most cautious writer to escape for any length of time its interdiction.

But Pushkin was by temperament unfitted to practice that cunning prudence which enabled the wary to veil their attacks on the corruptions and shortcomings of the governing classes; and the vicious surroundings of a despotic court were frequently exposed by him in some sparkling epigram with a sharpness that provoked powerful and dangerous enemies in high places. His trenchant verses on the detestable Arakchaeff; his ostentatious eulogy of Louval, the murderer of De Berri; his passionate *Ode to Liberty*, in which he anathematizes "the sworn assassins of freedom;" his bold asseveration in the *Epistle to Aristarchus* that, "in the sphere of intellect no concession shall be made to ignorant censors;" his witty *Christmas Tale*, where he represents the Tzar as blessing his people and bidding them rejoice, "because I have eaten, drunk, and dined well, and am fat, healthy, and full;" these and like effusions, though never printed, were circulated in manuscript from hand to hand, and obtained a popularity far greater than they would ever have enjoyed but for the

fact of their being strictly forbidden. But some of these obnoxious poems found their way to the palace, and in consequence the young revolutionist was banished to one of the southern governments of Russia.

Exile.

On May 5th, 1820, Pushkin quitted St. Petersburg for Kischineff, now of evil fame as the scene of the massacre of Jews in 1903. One circumstance connected with this episode in Pushkin's life must not be passed over, since it so thoroughly characterizes the position occupied by literary men at this period. It was currently reported in those circles of society which pretended to be well informed that, previously to his exile, Pushkin had been whipped in the punishment cell of the secret police department. The report reached the ears of the poet, and in a letter discovered among his papers after his death we find the following indignant reference to the insulting rumor: "In my first fury I resolved henceforth to emphasize my conversation and my poems with such insolences and revolutionary extravagances as should compel the government to treat me as a political criminal. I longed for exile to Siberia, as the one means left me to gain back my lost honor." How deeply he felt his enforced separation from everything that was dear to him is evident, not only from numerous letters addressed to his friends, but from the general tone of *The Caucasian Prisoner*, *The Gypsies*, and other poems which he composed at this time. And though we must not push the comparison too far, it is

impossible not to identify the poet with Aleko, the hero of *The Gypsies*, while in the tale related by the old chieftain of Ovid's banishment and sojourn on the shores of the Danube he expressed the sorrows of his own exile.

There is no occasion to dwell on the extravagances of which Pushkin was guilty during his residence at Kischineff. Cut off from all that could appeal to his better nature, he sought distraction in mad revels and noisy pleasures, the evils of which none felt more acutely than himself. "As far as I could understand Pushkin," writes one who knew him well, "he seemed to me to be a man who rioted over the bottle, or gave himself to the card table, without feeling any real inclination for either the one or the other." Happily, in the autumn of 1824, his sentence of exile was so far revoked that he was allowed to return to Michaelovsky, and two years later he obtained, principally through the intercession of Jukovsky, the permission to reside in any part of the empire.

Soon after his arrival in Moscow he was presented to the emperor, who, having received him with marked kindness, and conversed with him for some time, suddenly put to him the startling question: "Pushkin, if you had been in St. Petersburg, should you have taken part in the December revolt?" "Most certainly, your majesty," was the frank reply; "nearly all my friends were concerned in it, and I never would have abandoned them; but, as it is, thank God, my absence saved me." "I think," said the emperor, "you have been up to enough mischief; I hope you have grown wiser and will get into no further trouble. Only see that you send

direct to me all that you write; from to-day I will be your censor." Nicholas was evidently pleased with Pushkin's manly bearing, and that same evening told Bloudoff: "To-day I have had a long talk with the cleverest man in Russia." When asked of whom he might be speaking, he replied: "Pushkin, to be sure. Who else could it be?" While at Michaelovsky, Pushkin wrote, in addition to a number of lyrics, the first half of *Evjenie Oneguin*, *Boris Godunoff* and *Count Nouline*, and during his stay at Moscow, in 1826, completed *Oneguin* and wrote the most finished of all his poems, *Poltava*.

Marriage and Death.

In 1831 Pushkin married Mlle. Gontchareff, with whose family he had long been on the most intimate terms. For six years they lived in perfect happiness, and then stories affecting the honor of his wife began to be circulated, and a number of anonymous letters were received by Pushkin, in which her name was coupled with that of Dantes, a young cavalry officer noted for his irregularities. Without entering into details, it will be sufficient to state that Dantes was convicted of being himself the author of both the reports and the letters, and that the innocence of the lady, to whose sister he was at that time engaged, but whose name he had sought to sully, was completely established. But the poet was determined to be revenged, and wrote a letter to Dantes in which he vehemently denounced "the pitiable rôle which he had played in this affair." A duel followed in which Pushkin was mortally

wounded. His seconds conveyed him home, and carrying him to his study proceeded to break the news to his wife. When she hurried to the couch on which the poet had been placed he seized her hand, and pressing it affectionately to his lips, murmured: "I thank God that I am permitted to have thee once more by my side." She inquired if he would not wish some of his relatives or friends to be summoned; he turned his eyes to the shelves containing his favorite books and muttered in a low voice, "Farewell, my friends!" His last hours were cheered by frequent and kind messages from the emperor. "Tell him," said Nicholas to Jukovsky, "that his wife and children I will take under my protection." In the afternoon of the second day of acutest suffering he uttered his last words, "Life is ended."

His untimely death was mourned as a national bereavement, and from all parts of the empire men and women flocked to pay their last homage to Russia's great poet. He had often expressed a wish to be buried at Michaelovsky, and his body was accordingly transported thither, near the home of his early youth. A plain marble cross surmounts his grave, bearing the simple inscription, "A. S. P." Forty-three years after his death the first and only statue raised to his memory was unveiled at Moscow, his native city, amid solemnities which attested the debt owed to Pushkin.

Eugene Oneguin.

Pushkin still remains the greatest poet that Russia has produced. Since his death, the most prominent

names have been those of Lermontoff and Nekrasoff, both writers of genius, but confessedly his inferiors.

The dramatic poem of *Eugene Onequin* must, on the whole, be considered Pushkin's masterpiece. Though in places reminding us of Byron, it is no mere imitation, and is not liable to the charge of plagiarism. It exhibits a blending of satire, pathos and humor, with excellent character painting and descriptions of scenery remarkably true to nature.

Belinsky, the ablest Russian critic, commences his famous review of this poem by frankly confessing that it is "not without some natural fears" that he had undertaken the task. To a foreigner the difficulties arising from the thoroughly national character of the poem must be still greater, and he constantly risks the danger of quarrelling with particular traits of character or scenery that strike him as trivial or unreal, through lack of that larger knowledge of Russian life and thought to which a native only can attain. We may regard the work as Pushkin's truest and fullest profession of faith, in which are set forth in a light, easy, mocking manner, the vain foibles, dull emptiness, and lip beliefs of his country and age. In form and style it may occasionally recall Byron's *Don Juan;* but Pushkin himself deprecated any such comparison, and declared that "in the whole of *Oneguin* there is not a trace of Byronic satire." The shape given to his poem was not the result of any desire to copy Byron, but was adopted merely because no other style could possibly reflect the temper and disposition that now inspired the creations of the poet.

Pushkin had outlived his belief in melodramatic heroism; and if Oneguin, fancying himself to be suffering from the fashionable disease of his century, complains that he has already felt the fullness of satiety, and tries to drape himself with Childe Harold's mantle, the outward pose never touches the inner nature of the man; he never loses the stamp of his Muscovite origin, and if he assumed misanthropy, remains as Russian as he had been in the noisy pleasures of his early youth. On flying the world of fashion, Oneguin is driven to shut himself up in country retirement, where he passes whole days in "knocking the balls about the billiard table," and, unable to find relief in society or in study, nurses himself into a dull fever of sullen discontent with the world and mankind. To the description of these two phases in his life, both alike barren and aimless, Pushkin has devoted his poem. With that keen perception of the harmonious in art, natural to true genius, Pushkin instinctively perceived that such a picture of contemporary manners, in which the prosaic greatly outweighs the poetic, could only be given in the form of a romance, and *Eugene Oneguin* is accordingly a romance in verse, with strong dramatic elements.

The story of the poem is as follows: Oneguin, a St. Petersburg dandy, sated with the pleasures of town, retires for a time to his estate in the country, and there very soon becomes as cloyed with the monotonous routine of village life. While there he makes the acquaintance of Lensky, a mystic poet, who introduces him to the family of the Larens, well-to-do farmers

residing in the neighborhood, and to whose oldest daughter Lensky is engaged. Olga's sister, Tatiana, from the moment Oneguin is presented to her, thinks to see in him the hero of her dreams, and confiding the secret of her love to her old faithful nurse, writes a warm and passionate letter to Oneguin. The only answer she receives is the cold assurance that he is not fitted by nature for a domestic life; and the despair caused by the rejection of the love so innocently proffered is deepened by his strange conduct when next they meet. His attentions to Olga are so marked that Lensky, mad with jealousy, challenges him to fight a duel, in which the poet is mortally wounded. This catastrophe causes an estrangement between Oneguin and the Larens; but Olga quickly consoles herself by marrying a young cavalry officer, while the more romantic Tatiana is lost in grief and regrets. The good mother, grieved at her melancholy listlessness, employs the only remedy with which she is acquainted and secures a good match for her in the person of a high-placed general. Not long after the marriage, Tatiana chances to meet Oneguin at a fashionable ball. He is struck with the change that has come over the country girl, and remarks with wonder the grace and ease with which she plays the part of a lady of the world. The love which he had once been vainly invited to give he now feels for the first time, but in reply to his passionate advances she coldly bids him remember that "she is given to another and will ever remain faithful to him." With these words she leaves him dumbfounded, and the poet brings his story to an end by declaring that they

alone are happy who can as lightly bid adieu to the romance of life as he now parts forever from his friend Oneguin.

Boris Godunoff.

One of the strangest and most interesting chapters in Russian history is that which records the rise and fall of Boris Godunoff, on which Pushkin's greatest drama is founded. After the death of Ivan the Terrible, in 1584, his eldest son, Theodore, was proclaimed tzar, but owing to his weak and vacillating character, was never anything more than a puppet in the hands of Boris, his wife's brother. A Tartar by origin, this bold and unscrupulous adventurer had gradually risen from the position of court henchman to the highest rank among the boyars. The one aim of all his schemes was to have himself elected emperor, and for this purpose he persistently courted the favor of the people by counselling and, when necessary, forcing the reigning tzar to govern with mercy and justice. He, therefore, determined to wait patiently till the soft-witted Theodore had drunk himself to death, and then claim the vacant throne.

It is true, there were, even when Theodore died, two members of the royal family who would stand in his way, and these were the tzarevitch Dmitry and Ivan's niece Maria; but such obstacles were not regarded seriously in those days of intrigue and bloodshed. Accordingly, Maria was lured into Russia from her abode in Riga, and then immured in a convent, where two years later she died, or, as is more probable, was put

to death by Godunoff's orders. The young prince, Dmitry, now remained the only bar to the consummation of Godunoff's scheme, and he was quickly removed out of the way. On May 15, 1591, the alarm bell was suddenly heard sounding from the cathedral church of Uglitch, a town on the Volga, where the prince was residing with his mother. The court-yard of the palace was speedily filled with a frightened crowd, and the tzarevitch was found, with his throat fearfully gashed, lying dead on the ground. One of Godunoff's hirelings was seized, knife in hand, on the spot and torn to pieces by the infuriated people. An inquiry was held into the death of the prince, but Boris took care that the judges were selected from among his own supporters, and he was completely exonerated by their verdict from all suspicion of complicity in the terrible crime. The people of Uglitch were, moreover, severely punished for having dared to lay hands on his retainers. A few years later Theodore died, and the boyars and clergy invited Boris to mount the throne. For a while he refused, and to give significance to his refusal, shut himself up within the monastery in which his sister, the widow of Ivan, had some years before taken the veil. Once more he was elected by a large majority of the deputies, who gathered in general assembly at Moscow from all parts of the empire to decide the question. But he still protested with mock humility against being dragged from his holy retreat to assume the dignity of tzar.

It is at this critical moment in the career of Boris that the action of Pushkin's drama commences. Strictly

speaking, perhaps, it cannot be called a tragedy, but is rather a series of dramatic scenes, the historical worth of which is impaired by the servility with which the poet has followed the authority of Karamzin, whose portrait of Godunoff, however instructive it may be from a moral point of view, is at variance with the astuteness of judgment which friends and foes have alike attributed to the historian.

Pushkin's *Boris Godunoff* opened a new era in the history of the Russian drama. As a tragedian, even more than as poet, Pushkin broke loose from the trammels of classicism, and the play is completely free from those sensational effects, startling antitheses and strange anachronisms of stilted language in which the imitators of Corneille and Racine so liberally indulged. "Naturalness of scene and naturalness in dialogue," to quote his own words, "these are the first principles of all true tragedy. I have never read Calderon or Vega; but what a man was Shakespeare. I can never outlive the feeling of wonder which the study of his works has inspired."

The influence of these Shakespearean studies is perceptible not only in the outward arrangement of the drama or in the selection of those scenes in which the leading traits of the epoch are best interpreted and revealed, but in the far more important and more difficult matter of characterisation. Each of the personages is made to stand out boldly and apart from the rest; all that they say is in close harmony with their actions; their words and deeds are so intimately blended that we cannot change a single speech without destroy-

ing the portrait and making it altogether that of another person. In their delineation Pushkin remains faithful to human nature. Boris is not merely a hypocrite and a tyrant, but is also endowed with those generous impulses common to us all, and in spite of his crimes, more than once wins our sympathy as he tries to gain the love of the people by his deeds of mercy. In the same way Gregory, the false Dmitry, is no vulgar impostor; but his youthful thirst for action and his readiness, at the moment when success seemed most assured, to sacrifice all for the love of Marina, enlist something more than interest in his fate and raise him above the ranks of an ordinary stage hero.

In the opening scene we are introduced to the boyar Borotinsky, whose simple-minded belief in the sincerity of Godunoff's refusal to mount the throne the more worldly Shouisky laughs to scorn, assuring him that

> Boris will yet grimace a while,
> Even as a drunkard before a goblet filled with wine,
> But in the end will graciously consent,
> And without more demur accept the crown,
> And then—why, then, he will rule us,
> Even as others ruled before.

Shouisky is the perfect type of a time-serving, place-seeking courtier, who yields to authority while it is strong, never allowing himself to come into collision with it, but the instant it betrays weakness, turns against it and becomes the foe of that which he had before affected to worship. The good Borotinsky takes Shouisky's warning speeches for genuine coin, and

later thinks to flatter him by reminding him how well he had foretold the course of events:

Borotinsky.—You guessed aright.
Shouisky.— Guessed what?
Borotinsky.—Why, here but an hour ago, you remember?
Shouisky.—No, I know not of what you speak.
Borotinsky.—When the people were trooping to the Field of the Virgins,
You said——
Shouisky.—Now is not the hour to recall such things,
And I counsel you to forget them, too, while time allows.
Besides, I did but with a cunning-venomed speech
Try to probe your inmost soul,
And ferret out your secret thoughts.
But, see the people thronging to salute the tzar.
My absence may be noted and do me harm,
So, farewell, I will join the crowd.

The picture of this crowd before the gates of the monastery, waiting to learn the result of the interview between Boris and the nobles, is thoroughly Shakespearean in its coloring and tone, and nothing can exceed the fineness of touch with which the dramatist has portrayed the abject submission of the rude Moscovite mob, who, as an old writer informs us, "being well beaten by Godunoff's agents, did cry and howl like hungry wolves:"

First Citizen.—They have gone, now, to tzaritza, into her cell, Accompanied by Boris and the Patriarch and a crowd of nobles.
Second Citizen.—And what is the news?
Third Citizen.— Always the same.
He is still firm in his refusal, though there is some hope.
Woman.—(With child.) Don't cry, darling, don't cry! Look, there is the policeman.

He'll take you if you don't leave off! So, don't cry, my darling!

Second Cit.—What do you think, couldn't we get beyond the barrier?

First Cit.—Impossible. Why, even here in the square there's no elbow-room,
And further on it is still worse. The whole of Moscow
Has turned out. Only look, the ramparts, roofs,
Each story in the Cathedral tower,
The very pinnacles and crosses of the church
Are dotted with people.

Third Cit.—In truth, 'tis a fine sight!

Second Cit.—What is that noise yonder?

First Cit.— Hush, what cries are those?
The people are weeping, tears flowing,
As down they sink to the ground like waves,
Row after row; another and another; come, mate,
It is our turn now: quick, down on your knees!

The People.—Alas, have pity on us! Rule over us!
Be to us our Gosudar, our tzar!

Second Cit.— What are they weeping for?

First Cit.—Pray, what business is that of ours? The nobles have so ordered it.
Is it for us to ask the reason why?

Wom.—(With child.) What say you? All are ordered to weep!
And you the while sit still! I'll teach you, there's the policeman!
Weep, you brat! (Child cries.) Ah, that's right!

First Cit.—There's not a dry eye in the crowd;
I fancy, mate, we had better join in, too.

Second Cit.—But the tears won't come! See what is going on there?

The Peo.—He wears the crown, he is tzar, he has consented!
Boris is our Gosudar! Long live Boris!

After five years the dramatist introduces us to the cell of Peimen, the aged chronicler, who, after having

DEATH OF IVAN THE TERRIBLE

After an original painting by K. J. Makowski

Ivan the Terrible was Tzar of Russia, 1533–1584. He left his name written in blood upon Russian annals. Having killed his son, full of remorse, afraid of conspiracies, harrassed by superstitions, he betook himself, like King Saul, to the divination of witches, and expired horribly in 1584.

brought the cherished work of his life to an end, relates to his monk pupil, Gregory, the tale of Ivan the Terrible, the short, ill-fated reign of his son and the murder of Dmitry, the crown prince. Apart from its mere literary excellencies, which are of the highest order, this scene is most important as giving us the keynote to the entire tragedy. During these five years Boris has ruled well and mercifully, but has failed to ingratiate himself with the people, who look upon him as the murderer of the prince and believe the wrath of heaven to be resting on their land. The terrible famine of 1602, the great fire at Moscow and the Tartar invasion of the country are regarded as certain signs of divine displeasure. Their tacit rebellion is easily crushed, but though he may elude the judgment of the people, the voice of God speaks clearly in the voice of the unsuspected monk, wherein "the sins and darker deeds" of Boris shall be laid bare:

> And now there remains but one last record,
> And my chronicle is ended;
> The duty laid by God on me, a poor sinner,
> Fulfilled. Not in vain the Lord hath called me
> To be the witness and chronicler of these many years,
> And made book-learning a familiar delight to me.
> In days to come, some studious monk
> Shall write out the nameless work of my whole life,
> And lighting up, as I am wont to do, his modest lamp,
> And shaking off from its parchment cover the gathered
> dust,
> Shall rewrite this true story of my chronicle,
> That will teach future generations of the faithful
> The past history of their fatherland,
> Bring back to their memories tzars illustrious
> In their labors, their glory, and the good they did,

And lead them fervently to pray Christ's pardon
For their sins and for their darker deeds.
In my old age I seem to live once more,
As days once gone by pass again before me.
Is it in truth so long since they flowed by,
Filled and surging, like some ocean sea, with eventful storms?
For now they appear to me all tranquil and voiceless;
My weakened memory recalls but few of the heroes of the past,
But few of its great words are preserved freshly in my mind,
And the past, big with events, is, alas, irrevocable!
But dawn is near, and the lamp burns pale;
And there now remains but one last chronicle to write.

The words of Peimen discover to the ambitious Gregory a glorious future, and he resolves to fly the monastery and give himself out as the real prince Dmitry, who, the people are persuaded, had been miraculously saved from the hands of the assassins. His story obtains general credence, and before long a large and powerful party is at his command. Shouisky perceives that it will be to his advantage to go over to the winning side, but for a while affects loyalty to the Godunoffs, and warning Boris of the danger that threatens him, accepts the charge to lead the troops against the pretender. This scene, and particularly the sudden outbreak of scornful defiance on the part of Boris, as he bids his faithless adherents laugh at this "mirth-provoking" resurrection of the dead boy to war against the lawful tzar, is dramatically conceived; the higher qualities of the astute usurper are well brought out, and he proves himself to be possessed of a bold

self-reliance that enables him to confront without fear any peril:

Shouisky.—Even so, sire, it is my duty to impart
Intelligence most strange.

Boris.— I am listening; say on.

Shou.—But, sire—— (Pointing to Godunoff's son.)

Bor.— The prince, my son, may know
What Prince Shouisky has to tell. Say on.

Shou.—Sire, from Lithuania the news has come.

Bor.—Tell me, prince, is it not the same
As that which yesterday's messenger brought you?

Shou.—(Aside.) He knows all. (Aloud.) I had believed, sire,
That you were as yet unpossessed of the secret.

Bor.—It matters not, good prince. I wish to compare
Your news with mine, else it may be hard
To know the real truth.

Shou.— I only know this, my liege,
That in Crakoff a pretender has risen up,
And the Polish king and nobles have declared for him.

Bor.—And what, pray, is reported of him, who may this pretender be?

Shou.—I have not yet been able to learn.

Bor.— Indeed! in what, then, is he dangerous?

Shou.—Without question, sire, your might is all-powerful;
By the clemency, zeal and munificence of your sway
You have long enchained the hearts of all your subjects;
But, you know yourself, the ignorant people
Are fickle, mutinous and credulous,
The light victim of each idle tale and hope,
Obedient to the fleeting inspiration of the moment,
Callous and indifferent to truth or right,
And greedy swallowers of each lying fable;
The shameless adventurer can count upon their easy favor.
And thus, if this nameless vagrant
Can but cross the borders of Lithuania,

At once a crowd of gaping followers will flock
To the reborn name of Dmitry.

Bor.—Dmitry, what mean you? that dead boy!
Dmitry! . . . My son, withdraw.

Shou.—(Aside.) He grows red with anger; soon his fury will burst forth.

Bor.—Listen, prince; without delay, take instant measures
That Russia be securely cut off from Lithuania
By close serried lines of troops, so that not a soul
May cross the boundary, not a hare
Be let scud hither from Poland, not a crow
Be let fly from Crakoff. Begone!

Shou.—I go.

Bor.—Is it not true that this intelligence of yours
Is most mirth-provoking? Was there ever a time
The buried dead were known to rise from their graves
And question the tzar, the lawful tzar,
Chosen and appointed by the people,
And solemnly anointed by the holy patriarch?
Is it not, I say, mirth-provoking? Well, what?
Why do you not laugh?

At times, indeed, Boris is distracted by fears natural even to the boldest, and in his perplexity consults witches and diviners, who cheer him with deceiving promises; but, in spite of his fears, he does not allow himself to be unnerved or turned from his purpose by any dread, lest his crime should be discovered.

I was sorely tried . . . but now, I breathe again!
I felt, whilst he spoke, the blood rush to my face,
And then leave it all pale and blenched. . . .
For thirteen years one and the same figure,
That murdered child, has haunted and pursued me.
Yes, yes—now I understand the trick.
But what is he, this all-dreaded foe,
Or what harm can he do? An empty name, a shadow!

> Can then a shadow unrobe me of my royal mantle,
> Or a barren name despoil my children of their rights?
> Fool! there was naught to frighten thee!
> Blow but a breath, and the phantom is dislimned.
> So be it; I am resolved; henceforth no fear;
> But still no danger must be left unheeded. . . .
> Alas, how heavily sits the crown of Monomach!

At length a decisive battle is fought, and victory declares for Boris; but the victory can bring to the conqueror neither peace nor security. He feels that his enemy, temporarily discomfited though he may be, is able to rely on a force stronger than any he can wield, the faith and confidence of the people. He knows that the false boyars despise his low descent, and among themselves speak of him as "the son-in-law of a Tartar hangman, and in his soul himself a hangman." More than once he is made to feel the aversion in which the common people hold him and his race, as when a crazed beggar, who has been robbed of his last pence, cries out in the market-place for help, with the words: "Boris, Boris! let the thief's throat be slit, even as you did cut the throat of the boy-prince Dmitry." And at the very moment when he is planning the final stroke by which he hopes to rid himself forever of his enemies, the hand of death falls suddenly upon him, and the ill-secured throne descends to the young and inexperienced Theodore. The nobles and princes are assembled before the Kremlin to kiss the cross and swear allegiance to the new sovereign, but Shouisky persuades Basmanoff, the leader of the royal troops, to espouse the cause of the pretender. Theodore and his sister Xenia are closely confined in the palace,

and in the concluding scene of the tragedy, which takes place immediately under the windows of their rooms, the fall of the Godunoffs is sketched with that power of simplicity which forms the most striking characteristic of Pushkin's genius:

Beggar.—For the love of Christ, show charity!

Sentinel.—Move on; no one is allowed to speak with the prisoners.

Theodore.—Go, old man; I am still poorer than thyself, for thou at least art free.

First Citizen.—Brother and sister, poor things, prisoned like birds in a cage!

Second Citizen.—Much pity they deserve, the accursed race!

First Citizen.—The father, I grant, was a murderer; but the children have done no wrong.

Third Citizen.—They are all alike, all apples of one tree.

Xenia.—Brother, brother! I think the boyars are coming hither.

Theodore.—Yes, I see Golitzin and Mosalsky; but the others are strangers to me.

The People.—Make place, make place; room for the boyars!

First Citizen.—Wherefore are the boyars come?

Second Citizen.—It may be to take the oath to young Theodore.

First Citizen.—Indeed? But hark, what noise is that within the palace? They are fighting and struggling there.

Voices from the Crowd.—Listen, a woman's shriek! Let us force our way in! The gates are closed, and now the cries are hushed.

Mosalsky.—Maria Godunoff and her son Theodore have poisoned themselves. We have seen their dead bodies. (A dead silence prevails.) Well, why keep you silent? Quick, cry, Long life to the Tzar, Dmitry Ivanovitch! (The people continue silent.)

With these words the tragedy ends, and by their silence the people have pronounced the righteous punishment that shall ere long overtake the dethroners of the Godunoff race.

Besides *Boris Godunoff*, Pushkin wrote several dramatic sketches, evidently intended to form parts of different plays which he had planned, but unfortunately did not live to complete. Of these the most noteworthy are *Mozart and Saglieri, The Statue Guest, Rousalka, The Covetous Knight, A Feast During the Plague* and *Angelo.*

Mozart and Saglieri.

The earliest of these sketches is founded on the fact that at the first representation of *Don Juan*, while all were lost in silent admiration of Mozart's harmonious strains, a loud, sharp hiss was heard from a remote part of the theatre, and immediately afterward the famous composer, Saglieri, was seen to quit the house, pale with anger and envy. "There is no injustice done to his memory," writes Pushkin, "in supposing that the man who hissed *Don Juan* could be guilty of poisoning the composer." Notwithstanding its fragmentary character, the piece is marked by an unwonted power in subtle analysis of human motive. Two opposing types are set forth, the man of talent and the man of genius. Equally with Mozart, Saglieri is possessed with a love for his art, in the cultivation of which he finds his greatest joy, but he does not worship art for itself, is not content with the unmixed reward it affords and regards it but as a stepping-stone to fame. He feels how grudg-

ingly and in what small measure this fame, to win which he is eager to sacrifice and forego all the pleasures of life, has crowned the unresting labors of long years, while unsought and unasked for, it lightens up the lot of true genius that works unconsciously and reaps without effort its full and priceless recompense. He, the hard, patient toiler, is denied that wondrous gift which, unless born in a man, can never be acquired, and regrets that it should thus lavishly have wasted itself on "an easy idler" like Mozart. He cannot understand the indifference with which true genius regards the judgment the world may pronounce upon its creations. Thus, after Mozart had played a fantasia which he had composed during a sleepless night, Saglieri exclaims:

> Thou art a god, Mozart, and dost not know it,
> But I know it, I!

Mozart makes the bantering reply:

> Really? it may be so! . . .
> But my godship is deuced hungry.

There is in the reply something that piques his curiosity as to what this man really is, and at the same time arouses anger that the "godship" should be accepted with complacent off-hand assumption of his rightful claim to it. The two men agree to meet in the evening to sup together, and at table the conversation turns on Beaumarchais and the common report that he has sought the death of a friend of whose fame as a dramatist he was jealous. Saglieri rejects the re-

port on the ground that "the man is too much of a buffoon for such deeds," while Mozart, unwilling and unable to conceive that ill can dwell with the divine, passionately cries out:

> But he is a genius,
> As you or I! And genius and evil
> Are two things incompatible. Is it not so?

These words, innocently uttered, rankle the sore wound, and seem to be a reproach to the man who is conscious of the baseness of the crime he is about to commit; but he is still willing to commit it, in order that a greater than himself may not cross his path to fame; and with the taunt, "You think so?" he secretly pours poison into the glass of his friend and prays him to drink. When, having drunk the poison, Mozart sits down to the piano and plays, the soul of his assassin is touched, and the sweet melody of the newly composed *Requiem* moves him to tears:

> These tears
> Are the first I shed; and in them is a pleasure and a pain,
> As if at length I had satisfied some heavy claim,
> As if some surgeon's knife had keenly cut off
> Some ill limb. These tears, dear Mozart,
> Pay no heed to them. Play on, I pray thee,
> And fill my soul yet fuller with sweet harmonies.

The Statue Guest.

Pushkin's *Statue Guest* is a variation of the Spanish story of *Don Juan*. It is one of the most artistically constructed of all his works, and exhibits a rare harmony between the idea that underlies the drama and

the form which the idea is to assume. The hero is endowed with all those external graces which we are wont to associate with the typical Don Juan; but the poet has at the same time taken care to attribute to him certain qualities more peculiar to the Russian than to the Spanish lover. There is in his speech a cynicism that, if not altogether affected, is at least strained, in the evident desire to quell the better instincts of his nature and enable him to play more boldly the part of a man who, through his larger experience of the world, has broken from the faith and traditions of the somewhat narrow circle in which he was born. At the opening of the drama we find him, in spite of the sentence of exile pronounced against him, returned in disguise to Madrid, attended by his faithful Leporello. The familiar scenes recall to him more than one of his love adventures of the past, and his thoughts fly back to the days when his heart was divided between Inez, with her soft, low voice, and Laura, the gay actress. For a moment his better feelings gain the ascendency, and he involuntarily regrets the idle pursuit of pleasures which are no sooner enjoyed than despised, nor can the railleries of Leporello arouse him from his melancholy musings:

Leporello.—Well, what then? You have loved others since Inez.

Don Juan.—That is true.

Leporello.—And if we only live, others will surely follow.

Don Juan.—Even so.

He pays a visit to Laura, during which he slays Don Carlos, her lover, and then, learning that Donna Anna

is on her way to pray at the tomb of her husband, whose death in a duel had been the cause of his banishment from Madrid, disguises himself as a monk and resolves to woo her at the very foot of the monument raised to the memory of her beloved. Not suspecting with whom she is speaking, she begs him to join his prayers with hers, to which he makes the characteristic reply:

Don Juan.—I, I pray with you, Donna Anna!
I am not worthy of such a part.
Nor will I dare, with unholy lips,
Repeat your words of sacred prayer.
Rather from afar with reverent gaze,
Will I watch you, as bending low
You sweep the pale marble with your raven locks,
While it will seem to me that, on some secret errand,
A heavenly angel has descended to this tomb.
It is not in the troubled heart that prayer
Can hope to find its place. Thus will I dumb remain,
And think, how happy that cold marble
To glow with her soft breathed kisses,
And bedewed with her tears of love.

The whole scene is drawn with great force; and when, though still concealing his name, he confesses to be no monk and to have been urged to address her by a passion against which it were vain to struggle, the woman's vanity is touched, and her query, "Is it, then, long that you thus loved me?" shows that she is already yielding, and that the adventurous suitor need not despair of ultimately gaining his end. Before they part she promises to receive him at her house on the evening of the next day. Don Juan is in raptures at the success of his scheme, and defiantly invites the statue "to come on the morrow to his widow's house

and stand sentinel at the door." The interview takes place, and, all disguise thrown off, her suitor declares his name:

Donna Anna.— Leave me.
Thou, thou art my unkindest foe: thou didst rob me
Of all, of everything in life.

Don Juan.— Fair creature!
I am ready to sacrifice all in expiation of that blow
And at thy feet I wait thy command:
Say but the word—I die; bid me live—I live
Only for thee.

Donna Anna.— And so thou art Don Juan!

Don Juan.—Is it not true, thou hast been taught
To look upon me as a wretch and monster?
It may be that fame has done me wrong,
Or it may be that my burdened conscience
Is weighted with much ill; but from the hour
I first saw thee all is changed within me,
And it seems to me I am new-born.
In loving thee, I also love the good,
And for the first time I bend my knee
In lowly homage before virtue's throne.

Donna Anna.—Ah, Don Juan, thou art eloquent, I know;
I oft have heard of thy glib tongue and cunning wile;
They say, thou art a godless libertine,
An incarnate demon. How many poor women
Hast thou wrecked?

Don Juan.— Not one, till now,
Not one of them did I e'er love!

Donna Anna.— And shall I believe
That Don Juan is now first in love,
That he is not e'en now seeking a fresh victim to his lust?

Don Juan.—And had I thought to deceive thee, lady,
Why have told thee, then, my name,
Which must have ever remained unknown to thee
In which, I pray, consists my treachery or deceit?

Donna Anna.—Who can tell? But how camest thou here?
Easily thou mayst be discovered,
And then thy death is sure and certain.

Don Juan.—And thou art anxious for Don Juan's life?
I knew that hate could find no harbor in thy soul!

Donna Anna.—Ah, would to heaven, I could but hate thee.
But it is time, and we must part.

Don Juan.—To meet again?

Donna Anna.— I know not;
Perhaps some future day.

Don Juan.— Say, to-morrow.

Donna Anna.—Where?

Don Juan.—Here!

Donna Anna.—Ah, Don Juan, how weak I am of heart!

In accordance with the old legend, the drama closes with the appearance of the statue. The conclusion is necessarily somewhat ludicrous to a modern reader who has no belief in ghosts or nodding statues. But, while adhering to the fable, Pushkin has not failed to imply the lesson we may learn from the fate of Don Juan, and though the statue spoils the effect that fate is designed to produce, the poet cannot be blamed for making it the avenger of the crime.

The Water-Nymph.

Russian fairy lore has seldom been made to assume a more poetical form than that in which it is presented in Pushkin's *Rousalka*, or the *Water-Nymph*. The story turns on the old theme of love betrayed; but Pushkin has succeeded in investing it with all the tragic horror of an exceptional and unwonted incident. The

daughter of a miller is courted by a prince, only to be abandoned on the idle pretext that his position forbids him to marry one who is inferior in social rank, and the father, flattered at the thought that his daughter should be sought after by a nobleman, does his best to urge her not to let slip so good a chance of bettering her fortune. And though there is nothing radically vicious in the character of the man, the temptation of rank, title and wealth is sufficiently strong to stifle the feelings natural to a father. Even when he perceives that the prince is growing colder in his suit, and that his visits, once so constant, are each week becoming rarer and shorter, he has no thought of his daughter's misery, but implores her not to lose what may be the last opportunity, and when he next comes, to beg something of her rich lover. It is while he is giving this worldly advice that the prince, after a long absence, suddenly presents himself. There is a restraint in his bearing and an involuntary hesitation in his speech that only serves to awaken suspicion, and with all a woman's quick impetuosity to know the worst, she checks his labored excuses with the cry,

> Enough! now I know all, now I understand;
> Thou thinkst to marry? Thou wilt marry?

Prince.—What can I do?

> Be thyself my judge. Princes are not free,
> Like common maidens; they cannot choose for wife
> The woman they love best, but must marry as others
> Decide for them from interest or some extraneous advantage.
> But God and time will bring thee comfort and relief.
> Only, forget me not, and as a remembrance, take,

I pray, this fillet. Lean down and let me put it on.
I have also brought a necklace with me.
I pray thee, take it. Ah, and here, too,
Is something for thy father—give it him from me.
And now—farewell.

Miller's Daughter.—Stay! there was something I wished to say,
But what it was I cannot now remember.

Prince.—Think; it will come back.

Miller's Daughter.—I am willing to sacrifice all for—— But no, it was not that—— Stay!
It cannot be that we must part forever,
And that thou wilt now abandon me—— No, no, it was not that——
Ah, now I remember——to-day I felt a new life move within me!

In answer to her cry of despair, the prince has nothing to offer save a few conventional words of sympathy, and muttering to himself, "Thank God, it is over! I feel lighter and easier at heart; I had expected a storm, but it all passed quietly enough," he quits her, ignorant in his callous selfishness that this unnatural calm was far more terrible than any storm of uncontrolled and frenzied passion. Unable to bear the heavy shame, the poor girl throws herself into the Dnieper and is transformed into a rousalka, or water-nymph. In the meantime the marriage takes place and is being duly celebrated with all the pomp and quaint ceremonies peculiar to a Russian wedding. But suddenly the joyous song of the maidens is interrupted by a loud, shrill voice, whose strange fantastic chant is heard above all the din and noise of the feast:

Over the reeds and over the yellow sand
The swift stream chattering runs;
In the swift stream two fishes are playing,
Two fishes, two tiny red-finned roaches.
Hearken, sisters mine, and have you heard
The tale our swift flowing stream has to tell?
How yestern eve the ruddy maiden drowned herself,
And cursed her false lover as she sank?

The well-known voice is recognized by the prince, who at once orders search to be made for the miller's daughter, but she is nowhere to be found. When the poet next resumes his story, a period of twelve years is supposed to have elapsed, and we are transported to the banks of the Dnieper. The hour of the rousalka's revenge, though long delayed, has at length arrived. By a strange fatality which he cannot resist, the prince is compelled to haunt the scenes of his crime, and many a day he wanders there, listening to the sad moanings of the river. On one occasion he meets, first the father, whom the loss of his daughter has driven mad, and then the water-nymph's child, who with her prattle decoys him to the edge of the stream. It is at this juncture that the drama abruptly terminates. But notwithstanding its fragmentary character, it bears the impress of a ripe and fully-developed genius, and the legendary story, with all its fabulous machinery, is endowed with the power of a tragedy of real life.

V.

Gogol.

With the close of the eighteenth century there disappeared from Russia the dazzle and glitter which for well-nigh half a century had blinded the eyes of Europe. Catherine was dead, as also were nearly all the more distinguished members of her brilliant court. And now, stripped of its coat of whitewash, autocracy stood bare in all its blackness. Instead of Mother Catherine, Father Paul was now ruling, and a stepfather, in truth, he was to his people. Such was the terror inspired by this tzar that, at the sight of their sovereign, his subjects scattered in all directions, like mice at the sight of a cat. At last Panin originates, Pahlen organizes and Benigsen executes a plan, the accomplishment of which finds Paul lying in state, with a purple face, and the marks of the shawl which strangled him carefully hid by a high collar. "His majesty died of apoplexy," the people are told.

Alexander I and Nicholas.

Alexander "the Benign" succeeds to the throne, greeted by his subjects like an angel in the ecstasy of

the delivery, but cursed like a demon ere the five-and-twenty years of his reign have passed. The Holy Alliance with Shishkof and Arakcheyef is more than even Russia can endure, and at last a formidable protest is made by the armed forces of the Decembrists. The protest fails; five bodies swinging from the gallows and a hundred exiles buried in Siberia alive leave a monument of such failure, terrible in its ghastliness even for Russian annals. The iron hand of Nicholas now rests on the country, and for thirty years the autocrat can proudly say that now peace and quiet reign in Russia. The peace of death, the quiet of the grave.

But not all is quiet. Defeated in arms, the spirit of protest finds a battle-field where neither the trampling of horses nor the shot of cannon can avail. The spirit of man intrenches itself behind ideas, behind letters, and here it proves impregnable even against the autocracy of a Nicholas. The times call for the voice, and presently the voice is heard. It is the voice of Nicolai Gogol. He protests against the weakness of aristocracy, against what his noble soul abhors; but it was not given to him to announce the loftiest message, the message of peace, of love, of submission, the message of Tolstoi; the times were not rife for it; they called rather for anger and indignation, and of these Gogol was the exponent.

Russian Realism.

The fables of Krilov served to introduce into Russian literature a new and all-powerful element—that

of realism. The pompous ode, with its monotonous imitation of an antiquated classicism, and the sentimental idyl, with its affected jargon of Arcadian life, were no longer recognized as the highest forms of poetic expression, and the poet was expected to be the interpreter, not only of the loftier, rarer and nobler manifestations of humanity, but also of the daily cares, trivialities and solemn nothings of man's existence. But, like all great movements, whether in the world of politics or of letters, this reform was effected gradually and slowly, and it obtained its first consummation in Pushkin's *Eugene Oneguin.*

Nor was this change confined to poetry; but the prose writers and Romancists of Russia, disregarding the traditions of the past, ceased to copy foreign styles which naturally had nothing in common with the history or character of the Russian people, and little by little created a new and thoroughly national literature. Of all the writers who contributed to this transformation of the novel and the drama into the faithful reflection of the soul and nature of man, Gogol, both in point of date and of genius, was the first to note and seize upon the frailties that attend the best of us, to depict without exaggeration and without malice the wearying and commonplace details of daily life, to tear off the gloss of selfishness and deceit.

Gogol's Youth.

Nicholas Vassilivitch Gogol was born on March 19, 1810, at the town of Sorotchintzi, in the Ukraine.

Separated, at most, by one or two generations from the last of the Cossack wars, Gogol in his youth must have often heard from the mouth of his grandfather these stories of wild heroism and courage of which he was later himself the chronicler. He was educated, first in a public gymnasium at Poltava, and subsequently in the lyceum then newly established at Niejinsk. Numerous anecdotes have been handed down relating to these school days, and we read how he was wont to employ his leisure hours in writing original compositions, now in prose and now in verse, some of which obtained the honor of being recited in public at the annual commemorations. The death of his father, in 1825, the first great sorrow of his life, contributed not a little to confirm the melancholy of his character, a melancholy which at an early period cast a gloom over his whole career and made his biography one of the most painful records to be found in the annals of literature.

We are accustomed to think of Gogol as a humorist, and we find it difficult to believe that, at the very time when he was writing tales whose wild, reckless drollery provokes the sternest to laughter, the man was suffering and struggling to escape, if only for a moment, from the terrible thoughts of divine displeasure with which his soul was haunted. "The source of all the gayety," he writes in his *Confessions of an Author*, "which characterises my early compositions, is to be found in a spiritual necessity of my nature. I was suffering from fits of despair, the origin of which I could scarcely explain to myself, but which may have

been caused by my habitual ill-health. In order, therefore, to distract my ideas and give them, if possible, another direction, I used to imagine the most ridiculous scenes, picture to myself absurd personages and characters, and place them in circumstances as ridiculous as themselves."

The circumstances of the family had, at best, at times been straitened; but their position, on the death of their father, became still more precarious, and Gogol was obliged to quit the lyceum and choose some profession which should secure for him a livelihood. He resolved to devote himself to literature, and, as was natural to a youth whose entire knowledge of the world was confined to the narrowest sphere of provincial life, imagined that he had only to make his home at St. Petersburg in order to win wealth and reputation. But even this worthy desire was regarded by Gogol as nothing else than an unworthy concession to the temptations of the flesh. "Alas," he exclaims, "why is one so eager in the pursuit of happiness? The mere thought of St. Petersburg torments me day and night; my soul longs to break its narrow prison, and my blood boils with impatience."

Experiences in St. Petersburg.

The hopes of young Gogol were for a long time cruelly disappointed. His first literary effort, a poem on Italy, was rejected, in turn, by the editors of the chief metropolitan journals; the publication of his second work, *Hans Kuchelharten*, called forth from Pole-

voi, a reviewer, who then enjoyed no little authority, so merciless a criticism that the author withdrew the book from sale and burned every copy; his applications to enter the government service encountered unexpected difficulties and delays; his first appearance on the stage, to which he was tempted by the applause he had obtained as an amateur actor at Niejinsk, was so unsuccessful that the manager of the theatre refused to give him another part; his remittances from home were so scanty and irregular that frequently, in the depth of winter, wood was too expensive a luxury to allow him to heat his room.

Such, briefly, were Gogol's earliest experiences of the golden capital. It was not possible that under these circumstances, St. Petersburg could possess any attraction for him, and in more than one letter he briefly complains of the emptiness of its life, as he turns with uneasy longing to the home he had quitted and to its free, simple pleasures which he was never again to enjoy. All his failures he attributed to his impious rejection of a life of religious solitude, "which God had marked out for him," but to which he had preferred "vain and idle pursuits that must forever be a reproach and burden to his soul." He became a victim to the wildest hallucinations, and he describes to his mother a wild vision he had beheld of a threatening, angry figure, which, though it bore a woman's face, could have been no earthly woman, but one whom even to her he dares not name. "I saw her," he writes to his mother, "but I cannot name her—she is too majestic, too awful for any mortal, not only for me, to

name. That face, whose brilliant glory in one moment burns into the heart; those eyes that quickly pierce the inner soul; that consuming, all-penetrating gaze, these are the traits of none that is born of woman. Oh, if you had only seen me in that moment! True, I could hide myself from all, but how hide myself from myself? The pains of hell, with every possible torture, filled my breast. Oh, what a cruel condition! I think, whatever the hell prepared for sinners may be, its tortures cannot equal mine." The story of his dream reminds us of the strange apparition that disturbed the peace of Cowper, or the threatening arm and angry brow that startled Bunyan from his games at Elstow common.

Gogol now began to occupy himself with a series of short tales intended to describe the life and habits of little Russia. The numerous letters he wrote at this time to his mother might be quoted in evidence of the pains he took to render his sketches true in their minutest details. They are filled with questions concerning the costumes worn by the peasantry, the names given to various articles of attire, the traditional ceremonies with which they observed the different festivals of the year, and the superstitions, legends and fairy tales that still found credence among them.

Evenings in a Farm-House.

In preparing the volume, Gogol was greatly assisted by the advice of Pletneff, one of his friends in St. Petersburg, who recognized his talents, and at whose sugges-

tion the title of *Evenings in a Farm-House* was adopted. It was received somewhat coldly by a public accustomed to the highly-spiced romances of writers like Zagoskin and Marlinsky, but gradually worked its way into general favor, "and," says Belinsky, "though romancists and novelists of the old school condemned Gogol and sneered at his writings, they themselves before long began involuntarily to adopt his style and imitate his manner." The impression it produced on more competent critics may be judged from the enthusiasm with which Pushkin speaks of it in a letter to the editor of one of the St. Petersburg journals:

"I have just read the *Evenings in a Farm-House*, and am lost in admiration at their natural, unaffected and unforced humor, while many passages are characterised by the truest poetry and feeling. All this is so unusual a phenomenon in our literature that I have not yet recovered from my first feelings of astonishment. I am told that once, when the publisher went into the press-room, where *Evenings* were being printed, the type-setters began covering their mouths with their hands in order to stop giggling and laughing. The foreman explained to the surprised publisher that the workmen, while setting up the type, were almost dying with laughter. I fancy that Molière and Fielding would have felt honored by such a homage to their wit."

Pushkin's Friendship.

Within a few months after its publication, Gogol, by means of a commendatory letter from Jukovsky,

made Pushkin's acquaintance. The friendship soon ripened into the closest intimacy, and if Gogol sufficiently succeeded in overcoming his natural timidity to persevere in the career he had embraced, it was mainly owing to the kindly counsel and generous encouragement of the poet, then in the full zenith of his popularity. The subject, as well as the titles of some of Gogol's later works—among them *The Revisor* and *The Dead Souls*—were suggested to him by Pushkin, and everything that he wrote, before it was allowed to appear in print, was previously submitted to his friend's judgment and approval.

It was also through Pushkin's recommendation that Gogol was appointed teacher of history at the Patriotic institution, a position which he exchanged in 1834 for the professorship of history in the university of St. Petersburg. But he was little fitted, either by education or by his habits of life, for such a post and resigned it after one year, during which time he delivered only two lectures. In the meantime he published a second volume of Russian stories as well as his historical romance, *Tarass Bulba*. The summer of 1835 he spent with his mother and sisters, and it was then that he wrote the greater part of *The Revisor*, the production of which, shortly after his return, caused no little excitement in the bureaucratic circles of St. Petersburg society. "All are in arms against me," is the account he gives to his mother of the reception of his comedy; "the old titled government clerks cry out that it is plain nothing is sacred in my eyes when I dare to speak so insolently of men who are in the

service; the police, writers, merchants, are all to a man against me; everybody condemns me, and yet everybody goes to see the piece, and at the fourth representation numbers were unable to get a place in the theatre. Had it not been for the express interference of the emperor, on no account would the play have been allowed to be put on the stage, and even now there are some doing all they can to get it withdrawn by the censor."

The success attained by *The Revisor* brought with it a marked improvement in the material circumstances of Gogol's life, and he was enabled to travel abroad, visiting first Switzerland and then Italy, where he lived for several years. It was at Rome, while busily engaged in the composition of *The Dead Souls*, that he received the sad news of Pushkin's duel and its tragic end, and in the death of his friend he seemed to have lost part of himself.

Gogol's Last Years.

In 1840 Gogol returned to Russia for a short period, in order to superintend the publication of the first volume of *The Dead Souls*. From the appearance of this volume dates the close of his literary career; for though he afterward published his *Correspondence with My Friends*, the work can only be regarded as the production of a disordered and enfeebled intellect. It was written at a time when his religious enthusiasm had attained its extremest violence, and the impression it makes on the reader is extremely painful. The ascetic severities of his religious creed were practised

with a persistency that could have but one result—the complete prostration of bodily strength; and his death, which took place in the spring of 1852, is declared by the doctor who attended him to have been caused by long-continued and excessive fastings. During his final illness it was with the utmost difficulty that he could be persuaded to take any food, while every kind of medicine was rejected on the plea that "if it be God's will that I should live, He will of Himself prolong my life." His only words, when any attempt was made to relieve his pains, were "Do not torment me," and he lay for days motionless and speechless, his hands closed tightly on a rosary and his eyes fixed on a picture of the Virgin that was suspended on the wall. One of his last acts was to burn the manuscript of the concluding portion of *The Dead Souls* and to write a few lines, in which he prays that all his works may be forgotten as the products of a pitiable vanity, composed at a time when he was still ignorant of the true interests and duties of man.

Features of Gogol's Works.

Admirers of the modern sensational novel may look upon the works of Gogol as insipidly commonplace and exhibiting a sad poverty of invention. Nothing can exceed their simplicity of plot. In most of them there is an entire absence of intrigue. What, for instance, is the subject of his *Old-fashioned Farmers?* Two country boors, living in a dull round of thoughtless content, spend their sixty or seventy years in eating

and drinking, and when they have eaten and drunk their fill, die off. Utterly incapable of the slightest intellectual effort, ignorant of all the higher impulses and nobler aspirations that dignify our nature, unconscious of any pleasure beyond the satisfaction of those instincts which man shares in common with the beasts of the field—what interest can there be in the record of a life like theirs? All the emptiness, poverty and bare nakedness of their existence is exposed; not a single detail in their petty, monotonous career—each day the dull repetition of yesterday's aimless life is forgotten or passed over; and yet, such is the power of art, even when exercised on the most trivial of themes, that what in unskilled hands would have sunk into revolting burlesque becomes with Gogol the source of truest poetry and kindliest humor.

Gogol's Humor.

In one of his shorter sketches, entitled *My Return Home from the Theatre,* Gogol writes: "I am very sorry that one of the worthiest characters in my comedy failed to attract the attention and favor of the public. And yet this honorable, worthy personage played a most important part in the piece from beginning to end. The honorable, worthy personage of whom I speak is—Humor. He proved his worthiness by boldly presenting himself before the public, notwithstanding the little respect in which the world is pleased to hold him. He proved his worthiness by not being deterred by the fact that he is called by some

a clown, by others an egotist, and is believed by all to be without any of the finer feelings of the soul. No one would think of defending a humor of this kind. But I am a comedian; I have been long in his service, and ought not to shrink from saying a word in his favor. For humor is a far deeper and far more important element in human nature than some of us are inclined to imagine."

Gogol's humor is quiet and subdued in tone. This forced absence of passion gives strength to Gogol's satire and makes his irony biting. By a single word or a trifling phrase he will plant the blow aimed at some social folly or administrative vice with a vigor and certainty that renders it fatal. Thus, in the description of a general's daughter, which he puts into the mouth of a poor tchinovinik, or government functionary, who is infatuated with her beauty, after having made him expatiate on the charms of her person, with what exquisite banter does he sum up the cringing subserviency natural to his position in one expressive sentence, "her very handkerchief exhales the essence of a general's rank." Or, to select a passage from *The Revisor*, a comedy every scene of which abounds with similar touches of dry humor. The prefect is alarmed at the intelligence that his superior, the revising officer, may be expected on any day or at any hour, and begs the postmaster to open all the letters that in the meantime pass through his office. That exemplary official informs him that such has been his custom, "not from any state reason," as he takes care to explain, "but from curiosity;" some of the letters he had opened being so

entertaining that he really could not find the heart to send them on, but has kept them in his desk. When reminded by a cautious colleague that this is likely to get him into trouble with the public, the prefect cuts short the remonstrance by crying out: "Ah, batoushka, don't you see this is a family affair of our own; what has the public to do with it?"

Russian Patriotism.

The writings of Gogol are not only distinguished by a nationality in their style, subject and tone of thought, but are also inspired by a spirit of true patriotism and a warm, loving, eager pride in the fame and progress of his country. In his humor, in his irony, in his ideas, in his occasional outbursts of lyrical eloquence and in his pathos Gogol is thoroughly Russian. With what fondness does he turn away dissatisfied with all the trophies of natural and artistic beauty that surrounded his Roman house, as his mind flies back to his distant but unforgotten land, in whose vastness he thinks he sees the promise of her future glory!

"Russia, Russia! My thoughts turn to thee from my wondrous, beautiful foreign home, and I seem to see thee once more. Nature has not been lavish in her gifts to thee. No grand views to cheer the eye or inspire the soul with awe; no glorious works of art, no many-windowed cities, with their lofty palaces planted on some precipice, embowered in groves and ivy that clings to the walls, amid the eternal roar and foam of waterfalls. No traveller turns back to gaze on huge masses

of mountain granite that tower in endless succession above and around him. No distant, far-stretching lines of lofty hills ranging upward to the bright blue heavens, and of which we catch faint glimpses through dim arches entwined with vine branches, ivy and myriads of wild roses. All with thee is level, open and monotonous. The low-built cities are like tiny dots that indistinctly mark the centre of some vast plain; nor is there aught to win or delight the eye. And yet, what is this inconceivable force that attracts me to thee? Why do I seem to hear again, and why are my ears filled with the sounds of thy sad songs, as they are wafted along thy valleys and huge plains, and are carried hither from sea to sea? What is there in that song which, as it calls and wails, seizes on the heart? What are those melancholy notes that lull but pierce the heart and enslave the soul?

"And all the while I stand in doubt, and above me is cast the shadow of a laboring cloud, all heavy with thunder and rain, and I feel my thoughts benumbed and mute in presence of thy vast expanse. What does that indefinable, unbounded expanse foretell? Are not schemes to be born as boundless as thyself, who art without limit? Are not deeds of heroism to be achieved where all is ready, open to receive the hero? And threateningly the mighty expanse surrounds me, reflecting its terrible strength within my soul of souls and illumining sight with unearthly power."

The consummate art with which Gogol has exposed the emptiness of peasants' lives is most apparent in the skill with which he fixes our attention exclusively

on the one instance of activity that interrupted the monotony of their existence. The beginning, middle and end of one story is a quarrel about a gun; the beginning, middle and end of another is the purchase of a new clock. And in nothing does the debasing insignificance of their aims and ideas stand forth more prominently than in this exceptional effort, forming, as it were, the crisis of their lives.

The Revisor.

And so it is with Gogol's *The Revisor*, called in our English translation *The Inspector*. By limiting its action to that moment in the life of the prefect when he was aroused to activity by the fear of having the numerous misdeeds of his official career brought to light, he has emphasized the pettiness and trivialities of an existence that ignored the higher necessities and obligations of human nature. The expected visit and the arrival of the dreaded revisor form the sole idea of the piece, because in this one event, as in a focus, is concentrated the whole life of the prefect. When we are first introduced to him, he has already assembled the officials of the district to acquaint them with the alarming news he has just received from a well-informed friend that a government commissioner "is on his way from St. Petersburg, travelling incognito and with secret instructions. During the whole time he has been in office there has been no such inspection on the part of the authorities; but the times are sadly changed; officials are no longer allowed to be bribed,

magistrates are expected to administer justice impartially; any little discrepancies in the yearly accounts, which, even when the greatest care is exercised, may occur, are visited with exile to Siberia, and the new-fangled notions of "Voltairean reformers" have effectually robbed government posts of the profitable advantages they once enjoyed.

There is no need here to summarize this most humorous play, in which each successive scene plunges the chief participants deeper and deeper in ridiculous complications. Turn to the translation in this volume, and enjoy the rich treat and keen satire which have rendered Gogol's name a household word throughout Russia.

"In *The Revisor*," says Belinsky, "there is no one scene that we can declare to be better than another; for throughout, from beginning to end, it is conceived in the truest spirit of genuine comedy." Those who have read the play fully endorse the critic's verdict. "His aim in writing it," says another critic, "was to drag into light all that was bad in Russia and hold it up to contempt. And he succeeded in rendering both contemptible and ludicrous the official life of Russia, the corruption universally prevailing throughout the civil service, the alternate arrogance and servility of men in office."

Dead Souls.

The same motives of protest against a flagrant evil induced Gogol to write his great novel, *Dead Souls*. The hero of the story is an adventurer who goes about the country making fictitious purchases of "dead souls,"

that is, serfs who have died since the last census, with the view of selling their services to the government, and recovering a large sum for their loss. But his adventures are merely an excuse for drawing a series of pictures of an unfavorable kind of Russian provincial life and of introducing on the scene a number of types of Russian society. Of the force and truth of these delineations we have sufficient evidence in the universal approval of Russian critics.

VI.

Tolstoi.

A hundred miles due south of Moscow, on the old highway to the Crimea, amid a gently undulating country of alternating field and forest, lie the village and estate of Yasnaya Polyana, or Fairfield, the home of the Tolstois. The estate, which now includes about 2,500 acres, has been considerably increased since it was given by the Empress Catherine to General Tolstoi, a son of the first count, who was Peter's ambassador to Turkey. In the old days it was surrounded by a castellated rampart, but now it has a neglected aspect, seeming the domain of fallen grandeur. It is a white, two-story building of stuccoed brick, a roomy and unpretentious abode, having a broad veranda, with rude carvings of horses and birds on the railings.

Tolstoi's Father.

Such is the birthplace of Count Lyeff Nikolaevitch Tolstoy, or, as we call him, Leo Tolstoi—the day being August 28th, 1828 — and here he spent the greater part of his life. His father, Count Nicholas Tolstoi, had served in a regiment of hussars, was made prisoner by

the French in the campaign of 1812, and afterward retired with the rank of lieutenant-colonel. He was a fair specimen of the old Russian nobility—handsome, good-natured and happy-go-lucky. His son thus describes him in *Childhood and Youth:*

"He was a man of the last century, and, like all his contemporaries, he had in him something chivalrous, enterprising, self-possessed, amiable, a passion for pleasure. He felt a great contempt for the present generation. His two great passions were cards and women. In the course of his life he had gained or lost millions at cards, and he had been in love with innumerable women of all classes. A well-shaped and dignified figure, a rather strange gait, a habit of shrugging the shoulders, small eyes which always looked as if he was smiling, a large aquiline nose, irregular lips, a sort of lisp, and a bald head—such is my father as I remember him. Though he had never belonged to the highest circles of society, he had always kept the best company, and always been held in esteem. His disposition was one of those which require spectators in order to do a good deed, and he esteemed only what was esteemed by others. It is difficult to say whether he had any moral convictions. His life was so full of all kinds of impulse that he had not time to think about convictions, and in his happiness did not feel it necessary to do so."

Tolstoi's Mother.

Very different is the idea Tolstoi gives us of his mother. She died when he was too young to grasp ex-

ternal traits; but through the mist of his worshipful recollections we catch a glimpse of a much more attractive personality; and it is clearly from her side that he received his chief endowment.

"When I try to recall to mind my mother as she was then, only her brown eyes arise before me, always the same look of love and kindness in them; the little mole on her neck, a little lower than the little curls at the back of her neck; her embroidered white collar; her dry, soft hand, which caressed me so often, and which I loved to kiss. When my mother smiled, her face grew prettier, and all looked bright around her. If during the most trying moments of my life I could have caught a glimpse of her smile, I should not have known what grief is."

Childhood.

Childhood, written when Tolstoi was twenty-four years of age, is in essence an autobiography of a very original and wonderful kind; even if we did not know that it was written while youth and memory were still fresh, there is evidence of its authenticity in every chapter. The happy boyish years pass before us like a panorama as we read these long, but never wearisome, and often picturesque pages. We see a patriarchal home, with its multitude of servants—the major-domo, the faithful old German tutor, the steward, valet, man-nurse, maid-servants, the sisters' governess, a dependent idiot lad, Natalia, the old serf who was insulted at the offer of emancipation, coachmen, huntsmen and a hazy background of peasants in bright cotton dresses, work-

ing in the fields or gathered to watch the family coach taking father and children for a visit to Moscow.

His mother's death ended the idyll of childhood; and henceforth, at least until middle age, there is a deepening note of morbidness in his thoughts and acts. If there is anything of stoical self-possession in the older Tolstoi, it has only been achieved after long and painful study.

Life in Moscow.

The youth awoke into a new and altogether less pleasant life in the aristocratic circle of his maternal grandmother in Moscow—Frenchified Russians and Russified Germans for the most part, indolent and conceited. There was a momentary feeling of expansion: "For the first time I saw that our family were not the only beings in the world, that all the interest of life did not turn upon us alone, but that there existed another life, that of people who had nothing in common with us, who did not care or trouble themselves about us, and that many had not even an idea of our existence." But the sensitive lad was now to learn how great a solitude there may be in a large family amidst a great city, and what it means to be "always alone in the search for the good." His father became less and less to him; his sister and her friends began to have their own secrets and aims; the elder brother, who remained his favorite to his death, had also his own occupations; his new tutor, a French prig, inspired detestation; almost every one else was too old or otherwise too far removed for comradeship. He was thrown more and more back upon himself, and

with himself he was by no means in love. His plainness of feature was always a cause of torment to his strained and brooding mind.

"I was often under the influence of despair. I fancied that there could be no more happiness in the world for a man with such a large nose, such thick lips and small gray eyes as I had. I prayed for some miracle that would transform me into a handsome man. I was bashful by nature, but my bashfulness was increased by a conviction of my plainness. I feel convinced that nothing has as powerful an influence upon a man's manners as his outward appearance, and not so much his appearance, even, as his conviction of its being attractive or the reverse. I could not say that my face was expressive, intelligent or noble-looking. There was nothing expressive in it—the most ordinary, gross and unsightly features; and my small gray eyes, especially when I looked into the mirror, seemed rather stupid than clever; there was nothing manly about me; though I was not stout of stature, and was very strong for my age, all my features were soft, flat and meaningless. And there was nothing noble-looking in me; on the contrary, my face was like that of an ordinary peasant. I had large feet and hands, and at that time I felt ashamed of them."

At the University.

After the father's sudden death in 1837, the family was taken in charge first by his sister, the countess Alexandra Osten-Saken, and in 1840 by a relative of his

mother, Pelagia I. Yushkova, who lived in Kazan. He entered the university of Kazan in 1843. He describes at length his preliminary examinations, his chums, his visits to grand relations. Impervious to the ambitions of scholarship and research, unimpressed by the provincial aristocracy, too nice to enjoy the rough revels of the students, and repelled alike from aristocrats, professors and students by an unsocial disposition, he seems to have had during these two or three years an unhappy and unprofitable experience. His highest ideal, save during occasional spasms of humiliation, he describes as consisting, "first, in speaking French well; secondly, in keeping the nails long, well shaped and clean; thirdly, in knowing how to bow, to dance and to converse; lastly, in maintaining a perfect indifference to everything and a constant expression of exquisite contemptuous weariness."

After he left the university, against the pleas of rectors and professors, without graduating, he went back to the old country home, which passed to him in the division of the family property. He was passionately fond of music, and spent months in breaking in his thick fingers. He revelled in French fiction—Sue, Dumas, Paul de Kock—dramatizing every scene in his mind and always enjoying the éclat of the great heroes. But nature played freely upon his impressionable mind.

Literary Tendencies.

Tolstoi's instinctive trend, like the historic rôle of his countrymen, has been in the direction of a new syn-

thesis of the Eastern and Western spirits. Social circumstances gave him his first impulsion away from city life in the midst of the peasantry, and showed the impossibility of political activity. They helped to form from the beginning a non-political and even anti-political bias. When a choice of parties was presented to him, in the early fifties, he deliberately evaded it, and gradually struck out a middle line of his own, drawing thereto, as with the loadstone of genius, much of ultra-Russian as well as Western thought.

The extravagances of neo-Byzantinism only repelled him. He hungered after a native and personal revelation, but one which at the same time would go down to the deep things common to all men; that would bring health not only to himself, but to those old friends Ivan Ivanovitch and Natalia the serf. Moscow was to him little more than the seat of an effete aristocracy and the mausoleum of the early tzars. All his young sympathies were toward the liberal and even radical side. The later Nihilists grudged Tolstoi to religion, and Tolstoi grudged Tourgenieff to art. If Tourgenieff has revealed Russia to the West, Tolstoi has revealed Russia to itself. And in the central stage of this struggle for a better social state—the "going among people" to learn and teach—Tolstoi, in his own fashion, may claim to have led the vanguard of the Russian youth.

Military Career.

Such being his environment, it goes almost without saying that the vapors of youthful romanticism were

soon dispelled. One of his first short stories, *A Russian Proprietor*, tells the disappointments and discouragements which the young prince Nekliudoff meets when, having left the university without graduating, he begins to try to carry out all manner of fine plans for the improvement of the condition of his serfs. This was evidently a reminiscence of Tolstoi's own life at Fairfield between his student and his soldier days, and suggests a reason for the next step. A home visit of his elder brother Nicholas, then a captain of artillery serving at one of the outposts in the Caucasus, gave Leo the desired opportunity for a military career, and in 1851 he joined the same regiment as cadet or ensign.

For two years Tolstoi threw himself with complete abandon into this strange experience, fought lustily when the Circassian tribesmen became troublesome, entered fully into the life of the little Cossack post on the Terek river, lost heavily at cards, hunted with the rugged mountaineers, and fraternized with their women and children. About this Olympus of Russian poetry the need to write grew with the growth of physical vigor and the intensity of the mental solitude. After beginning *Childhood and Youth*, he wrote *The Cossacks* and three short stories—*The Invaders*, *The Woodcutting Expedition* and *Meeting an Old Acquaintance.*

We know little more of Tolstoi's life during the Crimean war than is told in his three sketches whose theme is Sevastopol. First appearing separately in a radical magazine, they were published in book form in 1856, and at once made their author's fame. There is little doubt that this harsh experience not only nipped

in the bud his romantic tendencies and his false heroics, but finally determined the line of his after-development. It gave him an abiding horror of war, an abiding suspicion of thoughtless patriotism, a sheaf of ghastly memories of butchery and death. The Crimean war was a costly blunder for England and a severe strain on Russia. Yet it brought a blessing to that empire by putting an end to a régime of brutal, ignorant conservatism and awaking a new national hope.

To a man like Tolstoi the very heart of the Crimean tragedy was the torture of the conscript serf, who had no real or intelligent interest in the long, bloody war. Yet, more graphic pictures of war have never been painted than those which are contained in his Sevastopol sketches. Their special truth is not alone for his own time and country, but just as necessary for the nations which, while flattering themselves upon a further advance in education and self-government, have converted Europe into an armed camp, and have carried examples of hate and violence to the uttermost ends of the earth.

The end of the war, the death of Nicholas and the accession of his son, Alexander II, were the signs of a brief revival of the intellectual activity in which Tolstoi, now in touch with the leading literary and artistic circles of the capital, at once became prominent. He has described in his fragment, *The Decembrists*, both the excitant effect of the war upon Russian society and his own welcome at its hands. The mere fact that he planned a novel on the subject of the revolt of 1825 illustrates his rebel sympathies, as well as the hopeful-

ness that beat in every Russian heart on the morning of the new reign.

Dissipation.

Besides his phases of mind and temper, Tolstoi was moved by the exigencies of a personal problem. There is no day so pure and so bright but the bitter taste of last night's sins will rise in the mouth and kill the savor of the best of things. In his thirtieth year the half of Tolstoi's soul still lay dormant: art alone does not suffice to keep a life clean, especially when the art has been recognized and taken to the unclean bosom of the world. His condition is described in the following passage from *My Confession:*

"I was young, I had passions, and I stood alone, altogether alone, in my search after virtue. Every time I tried to express the longings of my heart for a truly virtuous life, I was met with contempt and derisive laughter; but directly I gave way to the lowest of my passions, I was praised and encouraged. My kind-hearted aunt, a really good woman, used to tell me that there was one thing above all others which she wished for me —an intrigue with a married woman. Another of her wishes for my happiness was that I should become an adjutant, and, if possible, to the emperor. The greatest happiness of all for me, she thought, would be that I should find a wealthy bride, who would bring me as her dowry an enormous number of serfs.

"I cannot recall these years without a painful feeling of horror and loathing. I killed men in war, I lost at cards, wasted the substance wrung from my peasants,

deceived men and rioted with loose women. Lying, robbery, adultery of all kinds, drunkenness, violence and murder—I committed all; and yet I was none the less considered by my equals a comparatively moral man.

"Such was my life during ten years. In that time I began to write out of vanity, love of gain and pride. At twenty-six years of age, on the close of the war, I came to St. Petersburg and made the acquaintance of the authors of the day. I met with a hearty reception and much flattery. The prejudices and views of life common to these writers resulted, under the influence of the dissipation into which I plunged, in a theory of life which justified it. It was that life is a development, and the principal part in that development is played by ourselves, the thinkers; while among the thinkers the chief influence is again due to ourselves, the poets. Our vocation is to teach mankind. I wrote and taught I know not what. For doing this I received large sums of money, I kept a splendid table, had an excellent lodging, associated with loose women and received my friends handsomely; moreover, I had fame. But in the second, and especially in the third year of this way of life, I began to doubt the infallibility of such doctrine, and to examine it more closely. I grew disgusted with mankind and with myself, and I understood that this belief which I had accepted was a delusion. Still I called myself a thinker, a poet, a teacher. My self-confidence in teaching what I did not know amounted almost to insanity. Hundreds of laborers worked day and night setting up type and printing millions of pages to be spread by the post all over Russia; and still we

continued to teach, unable to teach enough, angrily complaining the while that we were not listened to."

After his military service, Tolstoi settled down to the uneventful life of a literary man, his chief and almost his only distractions being such as were caused by the management of his estate, in which he was greatly assisted by his wife. The years passed smoothly and swiftly, each one adding to his fame, until he was recognized as the greatest writer of his age. His philosophical and religious works, written after reaching middle age, were those on which he set most store; but the public preferred his narrative volumes, and *Anna Karenina* has probably a hundred readers where *My Religion* has one.

The Year of Famine.

Until extreme old age, Tolstoi's literary work was never long interrupted, except in the famine year of 1891. His love for the common people always usurped a considerable portion of his time and means and strength; but on this occasion, though enthusiastically engrossed with a work which was also of great importance to him, he cast it aside without hesitation, and passed several months in the famine district, in order to alleviate the misery of the sufferers. By his own exertions he founded more than two hundred soup kitchens, travelling to and fro over the snow-drifts, from village to village, through blinding storms and Arctic cold. His appeals for aid received responses from every direction, including foreign lands, for all knew that they

were sending their contributions to trustworthy hands. Yet this was but a drop in the ocean of the people's needs. Thousands must be refused, and it became necessary to make a choice among the starving. In this crisis Tolstoi did all that man could do. In spite of his endurance, he was sometimes so fatigued that he could scarcely express the simplest thought.

Tolstoi's Fate.

Such was Lyeff Nikolaevitch Tolstoi, of whom we now speak as belonging to the past, for his life-work is ended. He was one of the great ones of the world—great as a writer, great as a philosopher and great, above all, as a man. Of him the mighty empire of Russia might well be proud, for through him she was able to speak in clearest tones words of cheer and warning to the inmost heart of all mankind. In his religious works he repeated and enforced the original teachings of Jesus and the primitive Christians. Yet this inspired prophet of eastern Europe was publicly rejected by both State and church of his native land. The State threatened banishment; the Orthodox Church excommunicated him as a heretic and apostate. He was thus despised and rejected at the very time when his weighty messages were eagerly listened to by the entire civilized world.

Tolstoi's Works.

The literary life of Tolstoi divides itself into three periods, or, as it might more aptly be said, into three

phases, and while he was not a dramatist, notwithstanding his strong dramatic powers, writing only three plays, and these of no great merit, we may pass in review some of his more important works, not a few of which have served as the basis for dramatization. He began by writing reminiscences or illustrations of his own personal impressions, as in the *War Sketches*, *Childhood and Youth* and *The Cossacks*, in all of which he confines himself to narration. Perhaps his youthful talent is best known in the romance entitled *Kazaki*, which, as Turgenihiff truly says, is "an incomparable picture of men and things in the Caucasus."

The second period, that of ripe age, is filled chiefly by the two great novels, *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*. In these the writer's manner has considerably broadened, and even the framework of the fictions has taken an almost exaggerated aspect. *War and Peace* occupies no less than eighteen hundred pages. *Anna Karenina* first appeared as a serial, not in the course of months, but of years. Between the two parts the author stopped, as though he had lost interest in his work; but the public had not lost interest, and when, after more than half a year, the narrator resumed the broken thread of his story, his readers found themselves, as it were, dazzled by the return of the brilliant characters of the romance after this long eclipse.

In the productions of this second period, argument forces its way under cover of fiction. Thus, in *Anna Karenina*, which is the story of an adultery, Tolstoi not only presents us with an accurate picture of aristocratic customs in Russia, and shows as the centre, the

point of fascination in this picture, the subtle and penetrating study of a soul wounded by love, the wound of which becomes more and more painful under the effect of the worriments following her first fault; but it is also a statement and a peculiar solution of certain problems in the social order. Tolstoi wished to express his opinions about marriage, separation, divorce, celibacy and unions of the sexes freely agreed upon and religiously maintained.

War and Peace, likewise, is a sort of semi-military, semi-domestic story; it is a broad vision of Russian life, and especially of aristocratic life, whether in the camps or the residences of the proprietors during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, and especially at the time of Napoleon's invasion. Within this ample scope the author expresses his theories on military art, on war and peace, his philosophic doctrine of destiny and his religious fatalism. Some of the characters in *War and Peace* seem to give a prophetic hint of the dogma which Tolstoi adopted later.

These two works of Tolstoi's second period show a power and brilliancy that are truly Shakespearean. If his teaching at this time encroaches on the romance, still he understood marvellously well how to use that means for dissemination. Later the mysticism, traces of which are found in these works, developed in their author to such a degree as to make him look upon a novel as an object of scandal. He renounced the inventions of romance; he sacrificed fiction, which now he calls licentious; he would not take up the pen except to perform the work of a teacher or evangelist; he

wrote *My Confession, My Religion,* the *Commentary on the Gospels.* Of these three works, which illustrate Tolstoi's third manner, the first is especially interesting.

In *War and Peace* the main object of the author is to show us Russia as she was at the time of the Napoleonic wars, to reflect his nation in all its conditions as it appeared at that eventful period, not omitting the question of serfdom. Everything that is Russian is dear to Tolstoi, and because it is Russian. With the weaknesses of his countrymen he deals lightly, and in his eyes suffering and crime are very small matters, concerning which it is not necessary to disturb one's self. His views are akin to those shown in the old Greek plays, in which the faults and afflictions of the heroes are recognized as only the results of the immutable will of the gods. After his own fashion Tolstoi is a fatalist.

An older member of the Tolstoi family, Count Alexis Constantinovich, born at St. Petersburg in 1817, was of literary note. He entered the diplomatic service, and took part in the Crimean war as a volunteer. Afterward he held a high position at court until his death in 1875. He had no sympathy with his cousin's religious and social views, but was a typical Russian nobleman. His chief literary work was the dramatic trilogy *The Death of Ivan the Terrible, Tsar Fedor Ivanovich* and *Tsar Boris.* They relate to that striking period of Russian history which has already been described in connection with Pushkin's dramas. To the same period belongs his single novel, *Prince Serbrianyi.* Another of his dramas is on the familiar subject of Don Juan.

ANNA ARKADYEVNA KARENINA

The appearance of Tolstoi's ANNA KARENINA, *1877, was greeted with applause from one end of Russia to the other. From the culpable but lofty hearts of the two lovers, Karenina and Vronsky, the author draws the most powerful lesson from their moral torment.*

His ballads and lyric poems are highly esteemed in Russia.

Anna Karenina.

The appearance of *Anna Karenina*, in 1877, was greeted with applause from one end of Russia to the other. It proved to be the most popular of Tolstoi's works. The romance is the history of an adulterous amour, and the climax of the amour is suicide. But this suicide is not to be considered as a moral penalty, nor a species of divine judgment; for the author seems to have wished to forestall such interpretation of his narrative. There are in the romance other criminal amours, and it is without any sign of punishment that the wholly immoral relationship between the princess Betsy and her lover leads them to scandalous conduct. On the other hand, the passion which unites Anna Karenina and Vronsky is a sincere, profound, almost solemn passion, in spite of the illegality of their behavior. The hearts of these two lovers are culpable but lofty. Besides, the more sympathy the author shows in their presentation the more powerful is the lesson which he desires to draw from their moral torment. All the plan and all the interest of the work are here. What agonies of remorse this illegal union, so passionately desired, brings upon the guilty woman! What deep mortifications and what vulgar discomfitures, what deadly humiliations and what prosaic irksomeness spring from this false situation, and ultimately make it so odious, so painful, that way of escape

has to be found by an act of madness in a moment of despair.

The Power of Darkness.

Much of Tolstoi's time, as well as a liberal share of his means, was devoted to the common people. For him it was impossible to refuse to see a peasant, to give him alms, to decline to write, when needed, a petition to the court. On one occasion, while suffering grievous pain from an accident, he assisted a widow to harvest her grain, though barely able to walk. But the pain increased, and, without his knowledge, his wife went to Moscow and returned with a physician, who declared that another day's delay might cause the loss of his leg. Thus he was compelled to take to his bed, remaining there for several weeks, during which he wrote, or for the most part dictated, the play entitled *The Power of Darkness*. None of his works came to him so easily, because he had already prepared himself for the task by laboring in the fields and chatting with the peasants. In truth, whatever his mood or condition, Tolstoi never tired of writing. "I have work for a hundred years," he once exclaimed, "and I have but a few months to live." Yet he was not a rapid writer, and when written, his manuscript was very far from being completed. The proofs, when returned to the printer, were found to be covered with erasures and interpolations between the lines, at the sides, at the bottom, or wherever space could be found, together with transfers to other pages. The corrected proofs suffered the same fate, as often did a third set, some chapters being rewritten ten or a

dozen times. It was not that he cared for finely finished diction, which, as he said, was apt to "dry up thought and injure the impression." Clearness was what he sought for in his scenes and characters, and, as he would observe, "Gold is only obtained by strenuous sifting and washing." As corrections and revisions proceeded, some details stood forth more clearly, while others seemed to withdraw further and further into the background. When, at length, a certain degree of lucidity was obtained, he would read his work aloud to a circle of intimates, in order that he might benefit by their criticisms. This he did with his play, reading it to the peasants, though he does not appear to have gained anything by their suggestions; for some of his hearers began to laugh at the most touching parts, where the author expected tears. But perhaps his severest critic was his wife, who fearlessly expressed her opinion, her husband sometimes agreeing with her and sometimes stoutly defending his own position.

The Power of Darkness was first presented at the Little theatre, Moscow, in the winter of 1886, and was at least a succès d'estéme. Returning home from a visit on the night of the performance, Tolstoi found a crowd of students around the gates of his house. "We have come," they said, "to express to you our profound gratitude for *The Power of Darkness*." Entering the vestibule a few minutes later, one of them mounted a chair, and in an agitated voice addressed a greeting to the author, the others darting forward to kiss his hands. Tolstoi was so agitated that for several minutes he was unable to speak. It is probable that the success of the

drama was due rather to sentiment than merit; for the theme is a most repulsive one, and its effect is further increased by the intensity of the writer's realism. To witness the details of village criminality can hardly be profitable to those who were responsible for such conditions, while the display of dire social diseases, of squalor and bestiality, could not but deepen the gloom of every one interested in the problems of Russian life.

More to the people's taste was the *Fruits of Enlightenment*, produced in 1889 as a comedy in four acts, forming a half-humorous revelation of middle-class follies and vices. The scene of the first act is in the hall of a town house, where a group of peasants, who have come up from the country to arrange for the purchase of land, is placed in contrast with the sons of the master, who discuss spiritualism and other banalities. Meanwhile, the servants vary the routine of work with practical joking, and the mistress, who has a horror of dirt and microbes, comes downstairs and sweeps the peasants out of doors. The second act takes place in the kitchen, where the ejected visitors have taken refuge, and gives the servants' point of view. The remaining scenes describe, with dry humor and an amusing imitation of mediumistic jargon, an old-fashioned hypnotic séance, and the play ends with something like a farce, of rather ingenious construction.

Kreutzer Sonata.

In his sixtieth year Tolstoi wrote the much-abused novel, *The Kreutzer Sonata*, which in the form of a

story culminating in the murder of an unfaithful wife, is a terrific exposure of the degradation of woman to serve man's sensuality which is commonly sanctioned throughout society, and the depravity of marriage founded not on harmony of affections and ideals, but on fleshly and "romantic" passions. The story itself is well balanced, the language temperate, the characters speak like men and women we meet in daily life, mixtures of truth and falsehood fused by the selfishness of bitter individual experience. The assassin tells his tale in a railway train during a long Russian journey, one of the most natural stages for such a meeting of types and such a confession. The transactions of the marriage market; the training of children for a perverted life; the centring of art upon the production of bodily charm, "toys for man's pleasure;" the customary masculine license and the inequality of shameful results; the religious, poetic and social laudation of legal concubinage; the tragedy of incompatible tempers aggravated by jealousy and hate; the last abandonment of lust and betrayal of wifehood and motherhood—the revelation of the awful evil and hypocrisy of all this proceeds with the fearless, merciless sureness of a demonstration in anatomy. There are some exaggerations, but there is no extravagance.

It was not over *The Kreutzer Sonata*, but over the "postscript" and the supplementary essay on *The Relation of the Sexes*, that serious controversy arose; and then the question was whether Tolstoi's ultra-Puritanism has support in the facts and capacities of human nature. For in these later papers we are wafted away

from the gross realities of this present state to that ideal time and clime of which prophets have spoken, where there will be no more marrying and giving in marriage, and when, the service of the flesh being ended, humanity will be ready for its translation.

The main argument is to cleanse sex affection from animalism. Probably as to some concrete points Tolstoi himself is indeterminate; in *Work While Ye Have the Light* he reasserts his old view of the right family life through the lips of the Christian Pamphilius, who is made to say to Julian: "Never again utter those terrible words that a Christian life is possible for those only who are childless. On the contrary, one might say that to lead the life of a pagan is excusable only in those who are without children."

It has been remarked that Tolstoi's works, previous to *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*, contain no feminine figures. But thenceforward they come in crowds, and all of them are charming. This pleasure we owe, no doubt, to the author's marriage and to the influence of his wife, Sophia Andreevna. But is it not strange that in his second great novel the author should have made a vulgar incident of adultery the foundation and starting-point of his theory of social renovation?

Religious and Philosophical Works.

Tolstoi's religious and philosophical productions may be passed over in the briefest of phrase. When, in the two books entitled *My Confession* and *My Religion*, he pointed out the origin of his teaching, and laid its foun-

dations, he undertook two huge works—one a thorough criticism of dogmatic theology and the other a new translation of the Four Gospels. The spirit in which he approached this mighty task finds ingenuous expression in the following passage from *My Religion:* "It was long before I could accustom myself to the idea that after eighteen centuries, during which the law of Jesus had been professed by thousands of human beings —after eighteen centuries, during the course of which thousands of men have consecrated their lives to the study of that law—I should myself have discovered it as some new thing."

A perusal of *My Religion* leads almost to the conclusion that Tolstoi, following the example of Dostoievski, has reduced the teaching of Christ to five commandments—"Never fall into a rage," "Do not commit adultery," "Take no oath," "Use no violence in self-defense," and "Make no war"—and that from these he has deduced the necessity for the almost wholesale destruction of existing social institutions, with their constituent elements—justice, army, taxes and so forth. This, too, would appear to be the explanation of *Resurrection*, the subject of which story—wherein we see a man called to sit on a jury and condemn a woman who has been his own mistress, whom he has forsaken, and thus driven into a life of vice—is said to have been suggested to Tolstoi by M. Koni, the criminal expert. The author's conclusion is that juries, as well as every species of legal tribunal, should be suppressed.

Tolstoi still showed the highest mastery of his craft in those novels and tales with which he occasionally

broke the series of his philosophical treatises and exegetical works, and in all of which the same teaching, though under a different form, is carefully instilled. He was too apt, indeed, to forget the precept which was Goethe's legacy to all artists: "Depict, but do not speak!"

Popular Stories.

The *Popular Stories*, which were at one time Tolstoi's own favorite works, have been somewhat severely judged by Russian critics. They have complained that the author has failed to attain the simplicity at which he aimed, and certainly their artlessness appears somewhat artificial. One of the last tales published before *Resurrection* received, under the title of *Master and Workman*, a more kindly verdict. It embodies the antique teaching of the vanity of riches. A timber merchant—rough, coarse and hard-hearted—goes to the forest with his man, loses his way and is caught in a snow storm. He unharnesses the horse, mounts it and rides away, leaving his humble companion to his fate. The horse, failing to find its way through the tempest, brings him back to the sledge on which the workman is huddled, already stiff with cold and half-buried with snow. With a rush the uselessness of the cowardly attempt he has just made to save his own life, and the vanity of his past efforts to accumulate riches, which at such a moment have lost all value in his eyes, surge over the merchant's soul, sweep away the artificial layer of selfishness, and stir his underlying instinct of altruism and sympathy for his neighbor. His sole idea, now, is

to bring back warmth, with his fur coat and with his own body, to the poor wretch to whom he had not given a thought a little while ago. He stretches himself upon his body, and there, a few hours later, he is found in the same posture; he has brought his last undertaking to a successful issue. Death has come to him, indeed, but the workman is alive.

In Tolstoi's drama, *The Power of Darkness,* we recognize one of the masterpieces of literature. In it he seems to have created a new form of popular drama, and one capable of universal application. The idea that a fault may be atoned for by a voluntary confession and expiation is certainly not a new one. But none of Tolstoi's predecessors has succeeded in expressing it in so dramatic a fashion, nor with so much true and simple grandeur. He gives us nature herself, as she still lives and moves, taken from the rustic life, without the smallest affectation or the slightest touch of rhetoric. Figures and surroundings, methods of speech and ways of feeling, have all been observed, noted even to their most delicate shades, and rendered in a fashion that is almost miraculous. Though Nikita, the guilty peasant, speaks the ordinary language of the populace, he uses some phrases and expressions which reveal his knowledge of circles other than those of his own village.

Artist and Preacher.

By the majority of critics Tolstoi the artist is preferred to Tolstoi the preacher; but it is not so with his followers. By most of them he is revered as one of the

greatest of teachers, because he preaches the gospel of love, because he shows that only by love can man be truly said to live—that man can be truly blessed only when he devotes himself to the service of his fellow-men. In places his logic may be bad, his proof may be faulty. To be skilled in the art of fighting with words is no more essential to a noble soul than to be skilled in the art of fighting with fists. Both can, indeed, knock down an opponent; but knocking down is not the business of life, but raising up. And Tolstoi is especially revered among teachers because he first of all raises up; because he preaches what others who have raised men up for many ages preached; because he preaches what Christ has preached, what Emerson and Carlyle and Ruskin have preached—what will ever continue to be preached so long as there are souls to be uplifted and men capable of the task.

VII.

Recent and Contemporary Literature.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century a sudden stoppage took place in that intellectual current which had previously flowed from eastern to western Europe, and whereby the East had been giving back, under a new form, the ideas drawn from the older source. This system of exchange, in which western Europe certainly found an advantage of its own, has now almost entirely disappeared. The works of Tourgenieff, Dostoievski and Gontcharov are still read by the French, English, Germans and Americans, and Tolstoi's writings continue to find their way throughout the world; but even in these, foreign interest is not so fresh and constant as in former days, while among the writers of the younger generation Tchekhof and Maxim Gorky are almost the only ones whose works have even found admittance to foreign reviews. The rest remain utterly unknown. Have they nothing worth offering? The question has been answered by a far-seeing Russian critic, who says:

"We have grown very poor in the matter of talent. Our intellectual level has fallen; our conception of the

simplest problems of general existence has narrowed. We have no ideal, whether in ethics or æsthetics; utter selfishness, naked and open, to the point of cynicism, reigns supreme in our world of thought."

Among the leading causes of the literary stagnation of this period is the development of industrial enterprise and the sudden rush of almost the whole of the national force in that direction. The prodigies already performed are within general knowledge. The valleys of the Don have been transformed into another Belgium; the steel ribbon of the Trans-Siberian railway rolls its length down to the coasts of the Pacific ocean; Manchuria has been overrun. At the same time—and this is in agreement with the present system of moral pressure—the curriculum of the schools has been modified so as to increase the amount of technical instruction, and the time formerly given to general education has been curtailed; college pupils have no opportunity, now, for writing verses. The statesmen who produced novels and composed plays between two diplomatic missions have died out.

As an unmistakable mark of this decadence, it may be noted that Russian literature now subsists principally on translations. In a book published in 1892, and dealing with this decline, the poet Merechkovski made an effort to lead the younger generation to adopt something like French symbolism, in the hope that in them it might find the elements of a fresh season of springing growth. A few young writers were converted, but they could not catch the public ear. Of the threefold inheritance left us by Pushkin, Gogol and Belinski, the

legacy of the first-named is that which has suffered the most noticeable loss. In an out-of-the-way corner, a sanctuary hemmed about with silence and solitude, a small band of the elect still carries on the worship of which, toward the close of his career, Pushkin had made himself high priest. These exponents of "art for art's sake," as he himself described it, share his ignorance and scorn of the noise of the outside world—the feelings and passions of that general mass which, in its turn, knows naught of the mysteries which they profess.

Recent Novelists.

The favor of the Russian public is now bestowed on another group of novelists, far removed from Tolstoi and his views of morality and art. The lovers of æsthetic delights and the eager reformers of the forties and the sixties have given place to a new generation of readers, whose chief desire is to be amused or startled, and who are not over-particular as to the quality of the work which gives them the desired sensation. Boborikine and Potapienko are among those who best understand how to satisfy this need. The former is a bold follower after prevailing fashions. For a considerable period he published a novel every year, and never failed to touch on the topic of the moment.

Potapienko, whose celebrity only dates from 1891, is a great discoverer of dramatic situations. Generally speaking, he leaves them where he finds them. Occasionally he shows a philosophic intention. His story called *Sins* is a rather coarse exposure of the hypocriti-

cal virtue of a father before the artless eyes of his children, as following up the furrow traced in the pictures of Tolstoi. These two observers of life succeed only in bringing together a succession of tiny facts and faint impressions, instead of vivid pictures.

Tchekhof.

The star of this school is Tchekhof, who has hitherto proved himself a first-rate artist in an inferior style. *The Melancholy Tale* revealed a most successful search after simplicity, a natural gift for fitting his form to his subject, and an inclination to coarse humor. In a collection of tales published later, the young writer's range of vision appeared to be raised and widened. He touched on psychological conflicts in *The Sorceress* and *Agatha*, and even on social problems in *The Enemies* and *The Nightmare*, elements in the drama of existence which he had hitherto seemed to ignore. The vague hints, the hasty abridgments, of which the author makes use, were accepted, at that time, as an ingenious artifice, deliberately employed. But on this point Tchekof's admirers were soon undeceived.

The Melancholy Tale has been the most successful of his numerous works. Its two chief personages are of absolutely different character and condition, the man a savant, the woman an actress, whom chance has thrown together, but who are still more closely bound by their common sense of the vanity of life, and whose communion leads them, on parallel lines, one to loathe his science and the other to loathe her art. Such partner-

ships are not often made, and their results, as presented to us by Tchekhof, are not conclusive, for Katia, the actress, has no talent, and her protector strikes us as being a thorough simpleton. In the course of the book, the author makes an attack upon modern Russian literature. The savant reads nothing in his leisure time but French novels; they do not altogether satisfy him, but they are less tiresome than those published in Russia, and, at all events, they contain the essential element of all artistic creation—that sentiment of individual liberty of which not a trace remains in the Russian writers of recent years.

Tchekhof also wrote for the stage, publishing the drama of *Ivanov*, a comedy, *The Seagull*, and several other pieces, none of which have been successful. The two indispensable factors in any work intended for the stage, action and the development of character, are just those in which his stories are deficient. Clearness is indispensable in dramatic writing, and Tchekhof cannot cast off his twilight manner. Does he conceive his Ivanov to represent the young generation, which sets to work furiously at twenty, and seems worn out by its exertions before it reaches the age of thirty? Ivanov marries a rich Jewess for the sake of her fortune, and consoles himself for the inevitable disappointments she causes him, by seducing a Christian girl. The twofold performance leaves him so overwhelmed with debt, gray hairs and hypochondria, that he shoots himself just as he is about to lead a second bride to the altar. The real meaning of this conclusion is an enigma. That of the *Seagull* is similar, and odd as applied to comedy.

Everywhere in the author's early tales and stories we behold the same strange assemblage of neurotics, lunatics and semi-lunatics: well-born girls, rich and pretty, who suddenly, no one knows why, lose their heads, cast themselves into the arms of a man they have seen but once, and whom they will certainly leave on the morrow, even if they marry him; young men of twenty, who loathe life already; old men of sixty, who have just found out that existence has no meaning. The society thus brought before us is like a nightmare. All its members are bent on one thing only—the solution of the problem of life. Girls, young men, old men, all study it persistently. What is its meaning? They struggle desperately to find an answer, and suffer and die because none is forthcoming. The truth is that the mind of the world, as modern civilization has made it, is largely occupied, even in Russia, with other subjects, and when Tchekhof takes it to be absorbed by this peculiar anxiety, he is a prey to a fanciful delusion.

VIII.

Poland and Hungary.

The Polish language, with its harshness and its conglomeration of consonants, has always been a stumbling-block to those who would read the literature of Poland in the original. Even the names of the leading authors are almost unknown. Yet the voice of Poland is by no means silent; and a language which is still spoken and cherished by twelve millions of people may have a prosperous future before it.

Until the sixteenth century, Polish literature was almost entirely the work of ecclesiastics, many of whom were foreigners. Few of them could write in classical Latin, but their compositions throw much light upon the events of the time. In their hands was centred all the learning of the age until the founding, in 1400, of the university of Cracow, where Copernicus and other famous Poles received their training. Young men of aristocratic families, however, frequented the universities of Paris, Prague and Padua, and it was only after its reorganization, and the founding of a chair of theology by consent of Pope Boniface IX, that the Cracow institution began to grow in favor. Other universities

were established at Vilna and Zamose, and there were good schools at various places, especially the collegium of Posen.

In 1521, a quarter of a century after the first printing-press was set up, the first complete work was published in the Polish language. Its title was *Speeches of the Wise King Solomon*. Thereafter books multiplied rapidly, but works in the native tongue were rare, Copernicus being the first writer who made himself known beyond the limits of his own country.

The second half of the sixteenth century is considered by the Poles as their golden age. Poland was then the leading country of eastern Europe, and as there was universal toleration in religious matters, Protestantism was widely spread. But its reign was brief; for when the Jesuits made their appearance, the entire religious and educational system of the country passed under their control. Besides exterminating the Protestant sects, they took upon themselves to suppress the Greek church in Lithuania. Latin again came into fashion. Up to this time, with rare exceptions, only religious works had been published in the Polish language.

The first poet of repute who wrote in Polish was Rej of Naglowice, whose best work is a didactic poem entitled *The Life of an Honorable Man*. His *Joseph in Egypt* is a Mystery play, such pieces being common in Poland from an early date. It is of slight interest, except from an antiquarian point of view; it contains little poetry, and is full of anachronisms, mention being made, for instance, of masses, organs and German ser-

UNDER SOBIESKI'S REIGN

After an original painting by Joseph Brandt

"Let a Pole rule over Poland." This cry in the Diet of Warsaw, 1673, made John Sobieski King of Poland. He was the greatest of generals, and when he drove the Turks from Vienna a priest read aloud in the Cathedral the text: "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John."

vants. The first regular play, *The Dispatch of the Greek Ambassadors*, is a one-act piece with twelve scenes, by Jan Kochanowski, who has been called the prince of Polish poets, and came of a poetical family, his brother, cousin and nephew all contributing to the literature of their country. The drama was acted in 1578, on the occasion of the chancellor's marriage, in the presence of King Stephen and his wife. Kochanowski wrote in Latin as well as in Polish, and this double-sided authorship is found in many other writers. They composed for a learned and exclusive circle, not for the Jewish or German traders of the towns, nor for the illiterate peasant. Though their works are classical in form, the matter is Polish, and there is much national feeling in what they have left.

The disturbed state of the country in the time of Sobko, or Sobieski, can easily be explained by his frequent wars; and it must be acknowledged that the internal condition of Poland was one of complete anarchy. The excesses of a barbarous and selfish aristocracy had reached their height, and all good government was paralyzed.

During the reign of Stanislaus Poniatowski, the last of the Polish kings, there was a second era of development in the literature of Poland. This was the culmination of the French period, and its writers were rather verse-makers than poets, regretting that they were not Frenchmen, and sighing over the barbarism of their country. After the partition came the period of Romanticism, in which there is a national literature, though too often the literature of exile and despair.

So low had Polish literature sunk toward the end of the eighteenth century, that even feeble translations of insipid French poems were in vogue among the people. At this time Wegierski enjoyed a considerable reputation among his countrymen for his dramatic and satirical writings. In an era of great national disaster he was deservedly recognized as a patriot, but he died young. The laureate of the court of Stanislaus Augustus was Trembecki, whose sympathies were too much with the Russian invaders of his country. With these authors the pseudo-classical period may be said to close.

Russian Oppression.

After the threefold annexation by Russia, Prussia and Austria in 1795, the Polish monarchy was at an end. The weak and vacillating Stanislaus Poniatowski was compelled to abdicate, and afterward retired to St. Petersburg, where he spent the rest of his days in obscurity. After the attempted revolution of 1830, Poland had been declared a Russian province. The people were compelled to submit, and the spirit of revolt, which now and then broke out in riots, was for a time appeased by concessions, Alexander II establishing municipal institutions in Warsaw and other large cities. But the riots continued, and coercive measures were again adopted. In 1862 the grand duke Constantine was appointed viceroy of Poland. A few months later a secret conscription was held, and persons suspected of being hostile to the government were dragged from their beds at dead of night and compelled to enlist as

soldiers. The immediate result was an insurrection, attended only with guerilla fighting, in which the Poles showed stubborn heroism. By May, 1864, the outbreak was suppressed. The cost was terrible. Poland ceased to exist as a political division, though as a nation it could not be extinguished even by Russian cruelty and oppression. It was parcelled out into governments; the Russian language was to supplant the Polish in all public documents, in legal proceedings, and to a certain extent in trade; old institutions were supplanted by Russian administration, and the very name of Poland was expunged from official writings. Austrian Poland has been quiet since the massacres of 1846. In Prussian Poland, Germanization is almost complete. Posen has practically ceased to exist as a Polish town, and the names of many historic places have been changed for such substitutes as Sedan and Bismarcksdorf.

Dramatic Literature.

Under such conditions it would seem impossible that literature should flourish; yet in this period of degradation, extending from the fall of the monarchy to our own day, we find that some of the most distinguished of Polish writers have rendered famous an era marked by persecution, by exile and proscription. Foremost among them is Henrik Sienkewicz, the author of several dramas, though better known as a novelist whose works have been extensively dramatized. Of these the chief is *Quo Vadis,* a romantic tale of Nero's persecution of the Christians. Published in 1896, it quickly

achieved a popularity accorded to few productions of the latter years of the nineteenth century. He was first heard of in the United States in 1876, when, with a company led by Madame Modjeska, he attempted to found in California an ideal Polish colony. After its failure he returned to his native country and devoted himself to literature, in which he attained remarkable success. His writings, which consist chiefly of historical romances inspired by patriotic sentiments, have been excellently translated into English by Jeremiah Curtin and others.

Theatres.

A national theatre was founded at Warsaw in 1765, under the auspices of the court; but it was not until long afterward that anything in the nature of a national drama made its appearance in Poland. In tragedy, one of the first productions was *Barbara Radziwill*, an historical piece by Aloysius Felinski. Comedy was best represented by Count Alexander Fredro, both these authors belonging to the nineteenth century. Fredro was the most entertaining dramatist that Poland has produced, the only one, in fact, who has written anything of special merit in this department. Though his works are French in style, the characters are taken from Polish life, and from him dates the formation of a national Polish stage. His youth was spent chiefly in France, where he became a member of the Polish legion of Napoleon, and was in the expedition of 1812. After publishing nearly twenty pieces between 1819 and

1835, some severe criticisms caused him to abandon work; but after his death, at the age of eighty-two, several comedies were issued in a posthumous edition. A Frenchwoman named Marie Louise also did much for the Polish theatre, hiring a troupe of French actors and making the Poles familiar with something resembling the modern stage. There are also fairly good plays by Bahomolec, Kaminski and others.

The principal theatre for the Polish drama and ballet is still at Warsaw. It is a spacious and commodious building—or rather two buildings under one roof—and compares not unfavorably with the leading playhouses of Berlin and Vienna. But the pride of the capital is its theatre in the Lazienski gardens, which were laid out in an old bed of the Vistula by Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski, and contain beautiful shady alleys, artificial ponds, a palace with ceilings painted by Bacciarelli, several imperial villas and a monument to Sobieski. An artificial ruin on an island makes an open-air theatre, the stage of which is separated from the auditorium by a channel of water, while the decorations blend with the parks and the palace behind. The Saxon garden, the resort of the Warsaw aristocracy, has likewise its summer theatre, and is richly adorned with statuary, fountains and flowers. Open-air entertainments are also held in the Krasinki and other gardens.

The Hungarian Drama.

The drama of the Magyars belongs almost entirely to the nineteenth century, and outside of Hungary is

little known. Religious plays, known as Moralities, however, were frequently performed at a much earlier date, many of them containing mordant satires against priests and the Catholic church. The first Hungarian drama, *The Marriage of Priests*, published at Cracow in 1550, was in reality an exposition of Protestantism in dramatic form. Until late in the eighteenth century the drama in its proper sense did not exist, though foreign plays were occasionally acted by French and German companies.

Hungarian Drama in the Nineteenth Century.

The dramatic literature of the Hungarians was, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, still in a most backward condition, and it is difficult to assign any reason for the fact of its slow elevation. The first really great drama of a Magyar writer—*Banus Bank*, by Katona, produced in 1818—passed with scant notice for sixteen years, until a great actor, Gabriel Egressy, made it popular. Yet the Hungarians are naturally good actors, and very fond of theatre-going. There are many who speak of English and French as the only great dramatic literatures of the modern world; but in Hungary there is a wealth of drama at least as great in intrinsic value as anything in British drama written within the last century, and played by actors and actresses fully the equals of their colleagues at the Comédie Française. This remarkable growth did not, however, begin until near the middle of the nineteenth century. The epics and ballads of Vörösmarty, Garay, Czuczor and others

seemed to captivate the public to the exclusion of all other forms of poetry. The patriotic tone prevailing and expected in all popular works previous to the Revolution of 1848, threw their authors into the worship of the heroic past, and thus into Romanticism. It was, accordingly, quite natural that dramatists, in order to catch the public ear, indulged rather in ranting and tirade than in dramatic characterization. The heroes of Kisfaludy's tragedies, for instance, are merely rhetoric personified. Everything Magyar is perfect; the Magyars are delicately reminded, in pages full of endless adulation, that they are the greatest people of the world; their heroes are the greatest; their past the most glorious. Such exaggerations of patriotism may be tolerated in epic and ballad, where other redeeming features may save the literary value of the work. In drama it is fatal. Yet it is in the drama that Romanticism may come nearest to perfection. The writer of romantic ballads must, in the end, fall into the snares of jingoism, and thus vitiate his work, rendering it offensive to a sober posterity. The dramatist need not run the same risk. If he has power to chisel out of the given material of a nation's past the truly human character in all its grandeur and in all its shortcomings, then the historic staging and atmosphere of the past will serve only to set off the dramatic beauties of the play.

Katona.

To the dramatic poet it is indifferent from what part of the globe he takes his material; for humanity is

spread all over the planet. So a nation's heroic past may be quite welcome to him, provided he is a real dramatist. Katona was such. He is rough and inharmonious in language, but there is real dramatic life in his *Banus Bank*. For the first time in Hungarian literature the true tone of tragedy was heard. The terrible fate of Banus comes home to hearers, Hungarians or otherwise; it is yawning out of the abyss of conflicts to which all of us are liable. He is a loyal subject of his king, and yet bursts out in open rebellion; nay, worse, he kills his queen. He is a great patriot, yet finally makes a rebellious plot with a foreign adventurer. He is a perfect nobleman, yet ultimately breaks the laws of all true nobility. He is a loving husband, yet contemplates assassinating his beautiful wife. And as he is, so are the other persons of the drama. In them are pictured the conflicting nature of the human heart and character as it really is—rough, unbending, false, yet capable of sublime self-abnegation—or, as Petofi says, "Rain from heaven turning to mud on earth."

The plot is as follows: Bank, in the absence of King Andrew II of Hungary justiciar of the country, has reason to believe that Gertrude, the haughty and unpopular queen, countenances the vile designs of her brother Otto on Bank's beautiful wife Melinda. A rebellion of the malcontent nobles under Petur is breaking out. Bank, who ought to quell it by virtue of his office, is thrown out of his normal equilibrium by the news that Melinda has been seduced by Otto. Forgetful of his position, he obeys only the behests of his outraged soul, and kills Gertrude. The king returns; the rebellion

is put down, and Bank perishes. In Katona's drama there is more power than form, and it is sufficiently apparent that his chief model was Shakespeare. He himself did not live to see the great success of his own masterpiece, for he died, broken-spirited, in 1830, at Kecskemet, in the thirty-eighth year of his luckless life.

Szigligeti.

The first remarkable Hungarian dramatist after Katona was Edward Szigligeti, whose real name was Joseph Szatmary. From an early date he was in constant contact with the theatre and with actors, and so acquired great practical knowledge of stage lore. He had deeply studied the art of stage effect, and all his very numerous dramatic works testify to extraordinary skill in stagecraft. It would, however, be unjust to compare him, as some have done, to such writers as Kotzebue in Germany or Labiche in France. Routine, no doubt, was preëminent in many of his pieces; yet, beside and beyond the mere cleverness of the playwright, he had real vis comica and a profound knowledge of Hungarian society. During his lifetime that society was slowly but steadily emerging from the semi-civilized state of patriarchalism to the forms and usages of modern life. In such periods of transition there is ample material for any one gifted with a keen sense of humor. The aping of Western manners, as in *Marna* and *Female Rule*, the humor of the altered family life, as in *The Three Matrimonial Commands* and *Stephen Dalos*, with odd remnants of the former social state,

such as tramping actors and the still life of small towns —all this Szigligeti knew how to dramatize with great effect. Like Kisfaludy, he drew with great felicity on the stores of drastic humor pervading a conservative society composed of many a discrepant element and moving onward on entirely new lines of development. He tried his skillful hand at tragedies, too, and *The Shadows of Light* and *The Pretender* possess considerable merit.

Folk-Drama.

Szigligeti's rare stagecraft and witty dialogue alone could not have raised his name to the height on which it rests. He is justly famous as being the real founder of what may be called Hungarian folk-drama. The continental peasantry is generically different from any class of small farmers or farm laborers in England or America. That peasantry is in reality a world of its own, far different from that of society. The whole tone and mode of life of these two worlds are different; they are written not only in different scales, but also for different instruments.

Within recent times it has become sufficiently evident that the Hungarian peasantry lends itself to dramatization in the same way as any other community. Not only is the common humanity of man to be found in that peasantry, but it is modified, colored and discolored, and attuned in a different mood. It admits of tragedies proper, of comedies and of burlesques. It is Szigligeti's great merit to have discovered this new dramatic field; but it must be added that through the great revolution

coming over Hungary, as over the rest of Europe—a revolution social no less than political—the peculiar and distinct character of the world of peasants became, by contrast to the rising bourgeoisie and the changing nobility, much more easily discernible than it had ever before been in Hungary. Szigligeti was the first to seize on that dramatic possibility, and both for the discovery and the excellent specimens of folk-dramas which he wrote, he deserves all credit. Of the latter, the most remarkable are *The Deserter*, *The Csikos* and *The Foundling*.

Charles Hugo.

A passing mention may suffice for the dramas of Sigismund Czako, who for some time before his voluntary death in 1847, was very popular; of Charles Obernyik and of Ignatius Nagy, the two latter being very popular before the Revolution of 1848, owing to their excessively patriotic dialogues. A higher place in dramatic literature is due to Count Ladislas Teleky, who also died by his own hand. In *The Favorite*, the subject of which is taken from the time of the Roman emperor Valentinian III, he displays great force of irony, coupled with dramatic truth and power of imagination. In Charles Hugo the Hungarian drama might have gained a writer of rare quality, had not the overweening self-infatuation of the author, together with his poor knowledge of Magyar, rendered him a victim to his first success. Hugo's *Banker and Baron* had not only a great, but an extraordinary success; an enthusiastic crowd carried the author bodily from the the-

atre to his favorite café. This ovation unhinged the author's mental equilibrium, so that he considered himself a second Victor Hugo, and thus never wrote or attempted to write another great drama. The merit of *Banker and Baron*, however, is very considerable. It was, up to that time, one of the few attempts at writing a real bourgeois drama in which the common human heritage of virtues and vices, affections and passions, is presented with great force and dramatic vivacity.

A MARRIAGE PROPOSAL

A FARCE IN ONE ACT

BY

ANTON PAVLOVITCH CHEKHOV.

Translated from the Ferraris edition by

W. H. H. CHAMBERS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

IVAN VASILYEVITCH LOMOV.

STEPAN STEPANOVITCH CHEBUKOV.

NATALYA, Daughter of Chebukov.

A Marriage Proposal.

ARGUMENT.

Dressed in a swallow-tail, the hypochondriac Ivan Vasilyevitch Lomov calls one morning upon his neighbor, Stepan Stepanovitch Chebukov, to ask his daughter's hand in marriage. The father is delighted; but, unfortunately, as he calls his daughter, Natalya, he jokingly misleads her as to the visitor and his object in calling; consequently, she, little dreaming that Lomov has called to propose, disputes a trivial statement made by him, whereupon they fall into a quarrel. Chebukov, coming in, is speedily dragged into the dispute; and father and daughter, with bitter taunts, drive Lomov away. "And to think that such a fellow dared to come here with a proposal!" the father exclaims, as Lomov leaves. No sooner does Natalya thus learn the object of his call, than she insists that her father must bring Lomov back to her immediately. The father demurs, but obeys. Upon Lomov's return Natalya humbly acknowledges that she alone was to blame, and tries to lead up to the proposal. The lead is unfortunate, however, and in spite of her ardent desire to bring about the proposal, they are soon involved in another quarrel.

The father, likewise, is dragged into the second dispute, and the mutual taunts grow more and more bitter, until at last Lomov apparently faints. Natalya pronounces him dead and becomes hysterical. But Lomov moves, whereupon the father places his daughter's hand in Lomov's, tells him that she consents, commands them to kiss each other, and—to go to the devil and leave him in peace.

The author of this play, Anton Chekhov, "is universally recognized," to quote a thoroughly competent critic, "as the most powerful living writer in his country after Tolstoy." And this farce was written with serious intent: to castigate, by caricature and exaggeration, some of the characteristic traits of his countrymen.

SCENE 1.

Chebukov and Lomov.

Lomov.—(Enters wearing a dress-suit and white gloves.)

Chebukov.—(Walking towards Lomov.) My dear fellow. Is it really you, Ivan Vasilyevitch?——I'm more than delighted. (Shakes hands warmly.) Well, this is a surprise, my friend ——How are you?

Lomov.—Quite well, thanks; and you?

Chebukov.—Oh, so, so, thank you. Sit down my dear fellow and make yourself at home. Apropos, it really isn't just the right thing to forget one's neighbors so, my treasured friend. But why this formal dress—the swallow-tail and white gloves —on your way to some reception?

Lomov.—No; I came out to call here only, most estimable Stepan Stepanovitch.

Chebukov.—Well, then, why the swallow-tail? We've scarcely gotten round to New Year's calls as yet.

Lomov.—Now listen and I'll explain matters. (Takes him by the arm.) I came here most estimable Stepan Stepanovitch to ask a favor of you. On several occasions I have already had the honor of asking you to do me a favor and you have always, so to speak—but, pray pardon me—I'm terribly agitated; I'll just take a swallow of water if you'll permit, most estimable Stepan Stepanovitch. (He drinks.)

Chebukov.—(Aside.) The fellow's come to borrow money; he'll not get it of me. (To Lomov.) Well, what's the trouble, my dear fellow?

Lomov.—Why, you see, most esti—— Stepanovitch—excuse me Stepan Estimovitch—that is to say—but I'm so deucedly agitated you know. To cut it short, you alone can do me this favor, although I must confess that I've never done anything to justify the asking——

Chebukov.—Pray don't hesitate any longer, out with it, tell me what's the matter at once. Well?

Lomov.—Yes, I will—I will. I came to beg the hand of your daughter, Natalya Stepanovna.

Chebukov.—(Joyfully.) My dear Ivan Vasilyevitch! Oh, tell me again, tell me again, that I may comprehend it more clearly.

Lomov.—I have the honor to ask——

Chebukov.—(Interrupting.) My dear fellow—I'm so delighted. (Throws his arms round Lomov and kisses him.) By the bye, it's just what I've desired for ever so long. It's been my dream. (Drops a tear.) I have always loved you as if you were my own son. May God bless and make you both happy! But why am I standing here like a wooden man? I can't contain myself for joy. No, I really can't contain myself—I'll go now and call Natasha.

Lomov.—(Deeply moved.) Most estimable Stepan Stepanovitch what do you think, may I hope to win her consent?

Chebukov.—What! such a handsome young fellow and she not consent? Why she must be over head and ears in love with you—— I'll send her right in.

SCENE II.

Lomov, alone.

I'm actually shivering—trembling just as I used to tremble before examinations. The essential thing after all, is to come to a determination; whereas with taking too much thought, by vacillating, by talking too much and waiting for the ideal and true-love, one would never succeed in obtaining a wife—— B-r-r-r—How I shiver. Natalya Stepanovna is an excellent housekeeper, not unprepossessing, cultivated—what more could be desired? Meanwhile, my ears are beginning to buzz as a result of this agitation. (He takes a drink.) I must certainly marry. In the first place, I'm already thirty-five, an age, which I may term, critical. Then I really need to lead a regular life—my heart troubles me—continual palpitations—I get all worked-up over trifles and am always agitated. At this very moment my lips tremble and there is a twitching in my left eye brow—but it's most terrible at night when I attempt to sleep. No sooner in bed and dropping off into a doze when suddenly "twitch" in my right side, from whence it passes into my shoulder and from there into my head. I get up like a man that has lost his wits and walk to and fro. But no sooner have I returned to bed than "twitch" in my side again, and so for a score of times or——

SCENE III.

Lomov and Natalya.

Natalya.—(Entering.) Ah! it's you is it? And papa said there was some one awaiting me here to transact some business. Good day, Ivan Vasilyevitch?

Lomov.—Good day, most estimable Natalya Stepanovna.

Natalya.—Pray pardon my apron—we were just shelling peas for drying. Why have you neglected us so long? But pray be seated. (Both sit down.) Won't you have something to eat?

Lomov.—No, thanks; I've already eaten.

Natalya.—Have a smoke then—you can get a light here.—— What a splendid day! Whereas yesterday was so rainy that our laborers could do nothing. How much grass have you had cut? I was so greedy that I had the whole field mowed, and now I fear the weather. It would have been better to have waited. But what's going on? I see you're in full dress. That's something new isn't it? or perhaps you're going to a ball? Really, you're becoming more stylish all the while, but why this special elegance?

Lomov.—(Agitated.) Well, you see, most estimable Natalya Stepanovna——I should like you to listen——you certainly will be surprised, possibly made angry, but I—— (Aside.) How I shiver!

Natalya.—What do you mean? (A pause.) Well?

Lomov.—I shall try to be brief. You are already familiar with the fact, most estimable Natalya Stepanovna, that for a long time, indeed, from early childhood, I have had the honor of being acquainted with your family. My late aunt and her husband, from whom, as you know, I inherited my property, esteemed very highly both your father and your deceased mother. The Lomov family and that of Chebukov were always on the very best terms; apart from that, my property is contiguous to yours. You will recall that my meadow lands extend to the edge of your birch woods——

Natalya.—Excuse my interrupting. You said: "My meadow lands!" What! Yours?

Lomov.—Mine.

Natalya.—Indeed. The meadow lands are ours; not yours.

Lomov.—No, mine, most estimable Natalya Stepanovna.

Natalya.—That's news to me. When did they become yours?

Lomov.—What! When? I speak of those meadow-fields which form a triangle between your woods and the Burnt Bog.

Natalya.—Yes, yes; very well, they're ours.

Lomov.—No; you're mistaken, most estimable; they're mine.

Natalya.—Now just think, Ivan Vasilyevitch, since when have they become yours?

Lomov.—What! Since when? Why, they've always been ours.

Natalya.—Oh, excuse me!

Lomov.—It's shown on the map. Their ownership was contested, it is true, for a time, but now everyone knows they are ours. There is no question about it. Now you see my aunt's grandmother permitted your great-grandfather's peasants the use of this ground that they might make bricks. Your great-grandfather's peasants enjoyed the use of this land for some two score years, and had grown accustomed to regarding the land as their own pooperty, but with the abolition of serfdom——

Natalya.—What you tell me amounts to nothing. My grandfather, quite as much as my great-grandfather always maintained that their land extended to the Burnt Bog: that is to say, the fields are ours. What is there then to discuss? I can't understand.—— You're very provoking!

Lomov.—I'll show you the map, Natalya Stepanovna.

Natalya.—No, you're merely joking or perhaps just chaffing me—— What a surprise! For almost three hundred years we've been in possession of that land, and now all of a sudden we are told that it doesn't belong to us! Pray pardon me, Ivan Vasilyevitch, but I really can scarcely credit my ears—— Not that we care anything about the land, there are but five *dessiatin* in the entire strip, the whole hardly to be valued at three hundred roubles; but I revolt at the injustice. Say what you will, I cannot stand that.

Lomov.—Pray listen to me, I beg. Your great grandfather's peasants, as I have already had the honor to tell you, made bricks for my aunt's grandmother. The grandmother wishing to do the peasants a kindness——

Natalya.—Great grandfather, aunt, grandmother, I know nothing and care nothing about them. The land is ours; that's all.

Lomov.—Mine.

Natalya.—Ours. You can talk for two days, you can put on ten dress-suits, the fields have been and shall still remain, ours ours, ours. We've no desire to claim any of your land; nor, on

the other hand, do we wish to be dispossessed of ours—as you wish——

Lomov.—I care nothing, Natalya Stepanovna, for the fields, but merely claim them as a matter of principle. If you wish, I'll present them to you.

Natalya.—I also can present them to you, since they're ours.——But I must, at least, say that all this strikes me as very strange, Ivan Vasilyevitch. Until now, we have always regarded you as a good neighbor. Last year we loaned you the thresher and by so doing were compelled ourselves to wait for our grain until November. And now you act towards us like a gypsy;——you actually present me with my own land! Excuse me, but that isn't acting the good neighbor. According to my idea, it is impertinence, if you will permit——

Lomov.—According to your idea, then, I am a usurper? Mademoiselle, I have never appropriated to myself any land belonging to another, and I shall not permit anyone to charge me with such an accusation. (He pours out, precipitately, a glass of water which he drinks.) The fields are mine.

Natalya.—It's not true; they're ours.

Lomov.—Mine.

Natalya.—It's not true. I'll prove it to you. This very day I'll have the grass cut there.

Lomov.—What's that?

Natalya.—This very day, I'll send my mowers there.

Lomov.—I'll drive them off.

Natalya.—You'll not dare to.

Lomov.—(Pressing his heart.) The fields are mine; do you understand?——Mine.

Natalya.—Don't shout, I beg. At your own house you may hollow until you're hoarse with rage, if you like; but here, pray, keep within proper bounds.

Lomov.—Mademoiselle, were it not for my terrible palpitations and the way the veins are throbbing in my temples, I should speak to you in quite a different manner. (Shouts.) The fields are mine.

Natalya.—Ours!

Lomov.—Mine!

Natalya.—Ours!

Lomov.—Mine!

SCENE IV.

Lomov, Natalya and Chebukov.

Chebukov.—(Entering.) What's the matter? Why are you shouting?

Natalya.—Papa, please explain, won't you, to this gentleman, to whom those meadow-fields belong, to us or to him?

Chebukov.—(To Lomov.) My dear fellow, the fields are ours.

Lomov.—Pray permit me to ask, Stepan Stepanovitch, since when are they yours? You be reasonable, at least. My aunt's grandmother permitted your grandfather's peasants to use the fields gratuitously. The peasants enjoyed the benefit of the land for forty years, and came at last to consider it as their own, until——

Chebukov.—Permit me, my dear fellow; you forget that the peasants didn't pay your grandmother for the very reason, that its ownership was in question. But now, even the dogs that run the fields know they are ours. I should say that you do not appear to have seen the diagram.

Lomov.—But I'll prove to you that they're mine.

Chebukov.—Oh, you can't do that, my dear fellow.

Lomov.—Can't? But I will prove it to you.

Chebukov.—My dear sir, why shout? Shouting alone proves nothing. I've no desire for your property, nor do I propose to give away any of mine. Why should I? Indeed, should it come to this, should you wish to contest these fields, I should certainly present them to the peasants rather than to you. Understand?

Lomov.—I fail to understand what right you would have to give away others' property.

Chebukov.—Permit me to judge for myself whether I have this right or not. Really, young man, I am not accustomed to be spoken to in this manner. I'm twice your age, and I

must request you to speak to me more calmly and with more respect.

Lomov.—No; you evidently take me for a simpleton. You call my property yours, and then ask me to keep cool and speak respectfully. This is not the way good neighbors act, Stepan Stepanovitch. In fact, you're not a neighbor; you're a usurper.

Chebukov.—What's that? What did you say?

Natalya.—I'll order those fields mown at once.

Chebukov.—(To Lomov.) What did you say, sir?

Natalya.—The fields are ours and I'll not surrender, not surrender, not surrender.

Lomov.—We'll see. I'll prove by the courts that they're mine.

Chebukov.—By the courts? You just do it, sir. Just do it. I know you—you're only awaiting an opportunity to go to law. Your whole tribe were built that way,—every one of them.

Lomov.—Please do not insult my family. They were all honest people, and none of them ever brought a suit simply to ruin another—as your uncle did.

Chebukov.—Your family were all fools.

Natalya.—All, all, all.

Chebukov.—Your grandfather drank and your youngest aunt, Nastasya Mikhailovna, bye-the-bye, ran away with the architect——

Lomov.—And your mother was deformed. (Pressing his heart.) Oh, that stitch in my side! Oh, my head! Oh! oh! Water!

Chebukov.—And your father was a gambler and a rake.

Natalya.—And your aunt—a hussy with few equals.

Lomov.—I've no feeling in my left leg—and you're an intriguer. Oh, my heart! And, then, it's a secret to no one that, before election, you—— My eyes are becoming hazy. Where is my hat?

Natalya.—Your behavior is vile, dishonest.

Chebukov.—And you're a perfidious man—a traitor. an imposter. Yes.

Lomov.—Ah! here's the hat. Oh, my heart! Where am I going? Where's the door? Oh! oh! I must be dying—I can scarcely drag my leg. (Moves toward the door.)

Chebukov.—(Shouting.) Never again put your foot inside my door.

Natalya.—Just go to the courts. We'll see!

Lomov.—(Staggers out.)

SCENE V.

Chebukov and Natalya.

Chebukov.—(Shouting after Lomov.) Go to the devil! (Walks excitedly to and fro.)

Natalya.—What a brigand! After this, how can one ever believe in good neighbors?

Chebukov.—Brigand! Ignoramus!

Natalya.—Monster! He not only appropriates our land, but insults us, to boot!

Chebukov.—And to think that such a fellow dared to come here with a proposal! Yes, a proposal!

Natalya.—A proposal?

Chebukov.—Yes, the audacious fellow actually came here to make you a marriage proposal.

Natalya.—Make me a marriage proposal? Why didn't you say so at first?

Chebukov.—And that's the reason he rigged himself up in that swallow-tail. The calf!

Natalya.—A marriage proposal? To me? (Drops into an arm-chair and groans.) He must come back! He must come back! He must come back!

Chebukov.—Who must come back?

Natalya.—As quick as possible; as quick as possible. I feel sick. He must come back!

Chebukov.—What's the matter? What do you want? (Presses his head between his hands.) Miserable creature that I am! I'll disappear—go hang myself—I'm undone.

Natalya.—I'm dying. He must come back!

Chebukov.—Phew! Right away. Don't howl. (Runs out.)

SCENE VI.

Natalya, alone.

Natalya.—What have we done? (She groans.) He must come back! He must come back!

SCENE VII.

Natalya and Chebukov.

Chebukov.—(Running in.) He's coming immediately, devil take him! You can talk to him yourself, I don't want to.

Natalya.—(Groans.) He must come back!

Chebukov.—(Shouts.) But he's coming, I tell you. What a terrible thing it is to have a daughter to marry off! I'll cut my throat. Yes, I will. We've insulted the man, driven him away with bitter words, or, rather, you did, you——

Natalya.—No, you.

Chebukov.—You see, the fault's mine! (Lomov appears at the door.) Well. here he is, talk to him yourself. (Leaves.)

SCENE VIII.

Natalya and Lomov.

Lomov.—(Enters as if fagged out.) Terrible palpitations—my leg is paralyzed. Such a pounding——

Natalya.—Pray, pardon us, Ivan Vasilyevitch; we were over-hasty. I recollect, now, the fields are really yours.

Lomov.—My heart palpitates frightfully—the fields are mine—both my eyes twitch——

Natalya.—Yes, the fields are yours. Sit down. (Both sit down.) We alone were in the wrong——

Lomov.—It's due to principle. I care nothing for the ground, only for the principle.

Natalya.—As to the principle—— But let's talk of something else.

Lomov.—And so much the more, as I can furnish proofs. My aunt's grandmother permitted your great-grandfather's peasants——

Natalya.—That's enough, quite enough on that subject. (Aside.) I really don't know how to begin. (Aloud.) Going hunting soon?

Lomov.—I think of trying my luck with black pheasants, most estimable Natalya Stepanovna, but not now—after harvest. Ah! have you heard? Just think what a misfortune! My Ugadaï, whom you know, limps.

Natalya.—What a shame! and why?

Lomov.—I don't know—met with an accident, probably, or was bitten by other dogs. (Sighs.) The best of dogs, not to speak of the money locked up in him. Why, do you know, I gave Miranov a hundred and twenty-five roubles for that dog.

Natalya.—You gave too much, Ivan Vasilyevitch.

Lomov.—No, not enough, to my mind. He's a splendid animal.

Natalya.—Papa gave only eighty-six roubles for his Otkataï, and you'll agree. of course, that Otkataï is a much finer dog than Ugadaï.

Lomor.—Otkataï, much finer than Ugadaï? Well, really! (Laughs.) Otkataï much finer than Ugadaï!

Natalya.—Why, certainly. Otkataï is rather too young, it is true, but as to his form, superior to that of Valchyansky.

Lomov.—Yes, with the lower jaw shorter.

Natalya.—Have you measured it?

Lomov.—Yes.

Natalya.—Now, in the first place, our Otkataï is a thoroughbred, son of Zhapryagaï and of Staneska, while no one knows what blood your Ugadaï has in him. Moreover, he's old and as ugly as——

Lomov.—He's old, it's true; but, nevertheless, I wouldn't swap him for five of your Otkataï's. How is it possible? Ugadaï is a dog, whereas Otkataï—— But, really, it's perfectly ridiculous to discuss the matter. There are thousands and thousands of your Otkataï's. Their price is twenty-five roubles.

Natalya.—To-day, Ivan Vasilyevitch, you are possessed by a spirit of contradiction. A few moments ago you imagined that the fields were yours, and now that Ugadaï is a finer dog than Otkataï. I'm not at all pleased when I hear one say what he doesn't really believe. Now, you know as well as you know anything that Otkataï is a hundred times finer than that beas—Ugadaï. Why, then, say the contrary?

Lomov.—I see, Natalya Stepanovna, that you take me either for a blind man or a simpleton. Don't you really know, then, that your Otkataï is inferior?

Natalya.—It's not true.

Lomov.—Inferior!

Natalya.—(Very loud.) It's not true.

Lomov.—But, why scream, mademoiselle?

Natalya.—Then, why do you talk like a brute? It's disgusting! Why, it's about time you had that dog of yours shot, and yet you compare him to Otkataï.

Lomov.—Excuse me, I cannot continue this discussion because of my palpitations, which are beginning again.

Natalya.—I've noticed that the hunters that know the least always do the most shouting.

Lomov.—Mademoiselle, be merciful, and say no more. My heart is bursting. (Shouts.) Keep quiet, won't you?

Natalya.—I shall not keep quiet until you admit that Otkataï is a hundred times better than your Ugadaï.

Lomov.—A hundred times worse? Would that your dog were dead! Oh, my eyes!—my temples!—my shoulder!

Natalya.—Your Ugadaï don't need to die; he's half carrion now.

Lomov.—(Crying.) Keep still. My heart is bursting.

Natalya.—No, I won't keep still, either.

SCENE IX.

Lomov, Natalya and Chebukov.

Chebukov.—(Entering.) Well, what's new?

Natalya.—Papa, tell us frankly, now, on your word of honor, which is the better dog, our Otkataï or his Ugadaï?

Lomov.—Stepan Stepanovitch, I implore you, tell me but one thing: Is your Otkataï's lower jaw the larger, yes or no?

Chebukov.—Well, suppose it is? It's of no importance. He's the very best dog in all the country round, notwithstanding.

Lomov.—But my Ugadaï is better, you'll admit?

Chebukov.—Now, don't get excited, my dear fellow. Allow me to say—Ugadaï has very fine qualities—is a thoroughbred, sturdy and well-formed; but, if you'll kindly permit, your dog has a very grave defect—his age.

Lomov.—Pardon me, my heart is palpitating so. Let's get down to facts. You will doubtless recall that at the last hunt my Ugadaï kept even pace with the count's Ramsaï, while your Otkataï was a mile behind.

Chebukov.—He was behind simply because the count's game-keeper had whipped him.

Lomov.—For good cause. While all the other dogs were following the fox, your Otkataï had pounced upon a lamb.

Chebukov.—It isn't true. My dear fellow, I get warmed-up rather easily, and, for this reason, I beg you to cut short this discussion. He was whipped through jealousy, purely. Everybody had a rod in pickle for him. Yes, everybody. Oh, I know you. No sooner do you see a better dog than Ugadaï than you immediately begin—— Oh, I remember very well.

Lomov.—And I remember, also.

Natalya.—(Mimicing him.) And what do you remember?

Lomov.—Oh, these palpitations! There's no feeling in my leg!—I can't stand it any longer.

Natalya.—(Mimicing him again.) Palpitations? What sort of a sportsman are you? Your place is in the kitchen beside the fire, and not at a hunt. Palpitations!

Chebukov.—Yes, truly, what sort of a sportsman are you? The proper place for you and your palpitations is in the house, not in a saddle. It wouldn't be quite so bad if you really went to hunt game; but no, you go simply to hunt up law-suits and spoil the work of others' dogs. But let's drop this discussion. In reality, you're not a sportsman at all.

Lomov.—Come, now, and do you call yourself a sportsman? You go merely to curry favor with the count and concoct intrigues. Oh, my heart! You're an intriguer.

Chebukov.—What's that? I'm an intriguer? (Shouts.) Won't you keep still?

Lomov.—Intriguer!

Chebukov.—Whipper-snapper!

Lomov.—Old rat! Jesuit!

Chebukov.—Shut up! If you don't I'll pepper you as I would a quail.

Lomov.—Everybody knows—— Oh, my heart!—that your deceased wife trounced you. Oh, my leg!—my temples!—I shall drop, shall drop!

Chebukov.—And that you are hen-pecked by your housekeeper.

Lomov.—Oh, my! oh, my! oh, my! My heart's bursted! My shoulder's dislocated! Where is my shoulder? I'm dying. (Falls into an arm-chair.) A doctor!

Chebukov.—Whipper-snapper!

Lomov.—I feel so bad, so very bad. (Faints.)

Natalya.—What sort of a sportsman are you? You can't even keep your seat. (To her father.) Papa, what's the matter with him? Papa, look, papa. (Calls loudly.) Ivan Vasilyevitch. He's dead.

Lomov.—I feel bad—I can't get my breath—air!

Natalya.—He's dead. (Shakes Lomov by the arm.) Ivan Vas—— Ivan Vasil—— What have we done? He's dead. (Falls into an arm-chair.) The doctor, the doctor! (Becomes hysterical.)

Chebukov.—What's the matter? What do you want?

Natalya.—(Groans.) He's dead; he's dead!

Chebukov.—Who's dead? (Looking at Lomov.) Is he really dead? Heavens! Water! The doctor! (Puts a glass of water to Lomov's lips.) Drink. No, he doesn't drink. He must be dead. How unfortunate I am! Why didn't I finish myself? Why didn't I do it before now? What am I waiting for? Give me a knife! Give me a pistol! (Lomov moves.) But he's coming to, it seems. Drink. Here, so——

Lomov.—I can't see anything. Where am I?

Chebukov.—Get married as soon as possible—and go to the devil! She consents. (Places his daughter's hand in Lomov's.) She consents. You have my blessing—only leave me in peace.

Lomov.—Oh, what is it? (Rising.) Who?

Chebukov.—She consents. Well, then, kiss each other and—go to the devil!

Natalya.—He's alive. Yes, yes, I consent.

Chebukov.—Now, kiss each other.

Lomov.—Ah, who? (They kiss.) That's pleasant. But, really, what's it all about? Oh, yes, I understand. My heart!—my temples! I'm happy, Natalya Stepanovna. (Kisses her hand.) My leg has come round all right.

Natalya.—And I'm—I'm happy, too.

Chebukov.—And I'm relieved—phew!

Natalya.—You'll at least admit now, won't you, that Ugadaï is worse than Otkataï?

Lomov.—Better!

Natalya.—Worse!

Chebukov.—Behold the beginning of matrimonial felicity! Serve the champagne.

Lomov.—Better!

Natalya.—Worse! Worse! Worse!

Chebukov.—(Endeavoring to make himself heard.) Some champagne here—some champagne.

THE END.

THE INSPECTOR

(THE REVIZOR)

A COMEDY IN FIVE ACTS

BY

NIKOLAI VASILIEVITCH GOGOL.

FIRST PRODUCED AT ST. PETERSBURG UNDER THE AUTHOR'S OWN DIRECTION IN 1836.

Translated from the Russian by

T. HART DAVIES.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ANTON ANTONOVITCH SKVOZNIK-DMUCHANOVSKY, Prefect.

ANNA ANDREEVNA, his Wife.

MARIA ANTONOVNA, his Daughter.

LUKA LUKITCH, School Manager.

HIS WIFE.

AMMOS THEDOROVITCH LIAPKIN-TIAPKIN, Judge.

ARTEMIE PHILIPOVITCH ZEMLIANKA, Manager of Hospital.

IVAN KUSMITCH, Postmaster.

PETER IVANOVITCH DOBCHINSKY,

PETER IVANOVITCH BOBCHINSKY, Two local County Squires.

IVAN ALEXANDROVITCH CHLESTAKOFF, an official from St. Petersburg, supposed to be the Inspector.

OSSIP, his Servant, a serf.

CHRISTIAN IVANOVITCH HUBNER, a Doctor.

ABDULIN, a Shopkeeper of the town.

Also police orderlies and minor officials, shopkeepers, waiters and women belonging to the town.

THE SCENE IS LAID IN A SMALL RUSSIAN PROVINCIAL TOWN.

ACT I.

SCENE.—A Room in the Prefect's House.

Present: Anton Antonovitch, Prefect; Ammos Fedorovitch, Judge; Luka Lukitch, School Manager; Christian Ivanovitch, Doctor; Artemie Phillipovitch, Manager of Hospital; two Orderlies.

Prefect.—I have called you together, gentlemen, to tell you a piece of news, which I am afraid you won't much like. A government inspector is coming here.

Ammos and Artemie.—(Together.) What, an inspector?

Pre.—Yes, an inspector from St. Petersburg, incognito, having secret instructions, too.

Ammos.—That is the game, is it?

Art.—As if we had not worry enough without that.

Pre.—I had a presentiment of it; last night I dreamt about a couple of most extraordinary rats. It is a fact, I assure you; such brutes I never saw before in my life. They were black and of a monstrous size. They came and sniffed about and off they went again; and now here is a letter I have received from Andrea Ivanovitch Tchmechof—you know him, Artemie Phillipovitch; this is what he says—"My dear old kind friend and gossip (mumbles in a low voice, running his eyes rapidly over it) to tell you"—hum, hum! Oh, here it is—"I hasten to tell you amongst other things that an official has arrived with instructions to make an inspection of the whole province, and especially of our district. I have this information from a thoroughly trustworthy source, though he gives himself out as a mere ordinary traveller. However, as I know that you, like everyone else, have your little peccadilloes, and are not

such a fool as to let slip any little pickings that you might have made,"—hum, well, these are his ideas; oh, here it is—"I advise you to look out, for he may arrive at any moment, if indeed he is not already come, and is living somewhere in your town incognito." Yes, hum, hum! Well, the rest is all family matters. "Sister Anna has come here with her husband; Ivan Kirilovitch has grown excessively fat and is always playing on the fiddle." And so on, and so on. Well, there's a pretty state of things.

Ammos.—Most extraordinary circumstance, most extraordinary; and it is no laughing matter, I can tell you.

Luka.—What does it all mean, Anton Antonovitch? What is it all about? Why should an Inspector come at all?

Pre.—Why? (With a sigh.) It's fate, I suppose. So far, thanks be to God, they confined their attentions to other districts. Now our turn has come, that's all.

Ammos.—I think, Anton Antonovitch, that there is some profound political meaning in all this. I will tell you what, Russia, that is to say, intends to go to war, and the Government, you see, have sent an official to find out if there is not anything like treason somewhere about here.

Pre.—What a brilliant idea! You are a sharp fellow, you are! Treason in a district town. Are we on the frontier, I should like to know? Why, you might gallop away from here for three years without coming to a foreign country.

Ammos.—That is all very well, but still, I tell you, you don't understand, you don't; the Government sees far, and never mind what the distance may be, they have their eye on everything, I can tell you.

Pre.—Well, whether they have or not, I don't care; I have given you fair warning, gentlemen, and I advise you to look out; for my part I have taken certain precautions, and I advise you to do the same, especially you, Artemie Phillipovitch. There is not the slightest doubt that the first thing that this official will want to do as soon as he comes is to inspect the hospitals placed in your charge, to see that everything is in good order, that the nightcaps are clean, and that the patients do not look like sweeps as they usually do.

Art.—Oh, don't bother about that. Well, perhaps they might as well have clean nightcaps on.

Pre.—And then you must get written over each bed in Latin, or some other foreign language, what each patient has got. This is your business, Dr. Christian—when each patient fell ill, the day of the week, and the month, and really you must not let the patients smoke such strong tobacco. It makes you sneeze when you go in, and I think it would be better if there were not quite so many of them. It might be thought that they were not looked after properly, or the doctor was not up to his work, or something of that kind.

Art.—Oh, as for that, Dr. Christian and I manage first rate; "let nature take her course," that is our motto. We don't go in for expensive medicines. Man is a perfectly simple animal. If he is going to die, he will die, and if he is going to get well, why, he will get well, that's all; besides, our friend Dr. Christian could not very well explain himself to the patients, as he does not know a single word of Russian. (Dr. Christian grunts.)

Pre.—Well, you know, Ammos, I should advise you to look a little after the Sessions Court House; just in the vestibule, where the petitioners generally wait, the porter keeps a lot of geese and goslings, which go waddling about under your very feet. Of course it is highly praiseworthy in any one to go in for household economy, but still that is no reason why a hall porter should do so, and indeed, you know that is not exactly the place for it. I meant to have told you about this before, but somehow or other I always forgot to.

Ammos.—All right; I will have them all driven out to-day into the kitchen. I tell you what: come and dine with me, and we will get rid of a few.

Pre.—Another bad thing is that in the court itself there is all manner of rubbish put out to dry, and there is a hunting whip hanging above the very cupboard which contains the rolls of the court. I know you are a great man for sport, but still I think you had better take it down temporarily, and when the inspector has gone away you can hang it up again if you like. Then that assessor of yours; I believe he is a good man at his work, but he smells so infernally of liquor, as if he had just

come out of a distillery. I don't think that is quite the correct thing. I would have spoken to you about this a long time ago, but something or other put it out of my head. You know there is a remedy for that sort of thing, although I believe he says he has had that peculiar odor about him since he was born. He might be advised to eat onions or garlic or something of that kind. Our friend Dr. Christian, here, could give him lots of drugs which would set him all right. (Dr. Christian grunts again.)

Ammos.—No, he says it is incurable; he says that his nurse injured him when he was a child, and he smelt of brandy ever since.

Pre.—Well, then, it can't be helped. I merely wanted to call your attention to it; and now as to the private arrangements, and what Andrea Ivanovitch is pleased to call "little peccadilloes." I really don't know what to say; and, indeed, what is there to be said? Every man has his little weaknesses; he was created by Providence like that, and it is no good your Voltairean free-thinkers saying he was not.

Ammos.—But, Anton Antonovitch, what do you understand by these little weaknesses, as you call them? There are weaknesses and weaknesses. I tell every one openly that I take bribes, but then what kind of bribes are they? Greyhound pups, that is all; that is quite another thing.

Pre.—That does not matter a bit; greyhound puppies or anything else, they are bribes all the same.

Ammos.—I don't agree with you there. Now, if some one has a fur coat worth 500 rubles, or a shawl for your wife——

Pre.—Well, that is not a bit worse than taking greyhound puppies. You are an atheist, you are, you don't go to church, whereas I am firm in the faith, at all events, and go every Sunday. Oh, I know you; when you begin to talk about the creation of the world, it is enough to make one's hair stand on end.

Ammos.—Well, they are my own opinions; I have reasoned them out for myself.

Pre.—In some cases a great deal of talent is worse than none at all. However, I merely mentioned the court as it were casually, for to tell the truth, it is hardly to be supposed that any one would be such a fool as to look into it; it is just one

of those blessed institutions which Providence itself looks after, I suppose; but there is another thing of much more importance, the schools; Luka Lukitch, you really must look after the masters, and see that they are all right. They are learned men, of course, educated in various colleges, but they have very queer manners, as, indeed, is always the case with men of that profession. One of them, for instance—that fellow with the fat face, I can't remember his name—he never can go up into his chair without making the most extraordinary faces, like this (imitates him), and then he takes hold of his beard and smoothes it under his necktie. Of course it is all very well for him to make faces like that at the boys; I dare say that is part of their training, it is all right for them, I am no judge of that; but fancy if he did it at some official visitor! It might be a most serious matter. This inspector, or some other personage, might take it as a personal insult, and heaven knows what might be the consequences.

Luka.—Well, but what can I do with him? I have told him about it lots of times; only the other day, when our director came, he made the most hideous faces I have ever seen in my life. He doesn't mean any harm, but I get a reprimand for it, all the same, in the shape of, "Why are the youth corrupted with free-thinking?"

Pre.—Well, then, there is the history master. I must really speak about him; he has a learned head on his shoulders, no doubt about that, and has absorbed a tremendous lot of information, but he lectures with such warmth that he quite forgets himself. I heard him once in class. So long as he kept to the Assyrians and the Babylonians, he was all right; but when he came to Alexander of Macedon, I can't tell you how he went on. I declare I thought the place was on fire. He jumped down from his desk, seized his chair and dashed it on the ground; he meant, of course, that Alexander the Great was a great hero; still, that is no reason why you should go breaking chairs; it is a loss to the government, too.

Luka.—Yes, he is an enthusiastic fellow. I have spoken to him lots of times about it, and all his answer is: "Say what you like, I will not spare life itself in the cause of learning."

Pre.—Yes, that is the inscrutable law of fate—a man of genius either takes to drink, or else he goes and makes hideous faces which frighten the very life out of one.

Luka.—Heaven forbid that I should ever have to be a teacher. Nothing but worry; every one interferes with you; everybody wants to show that he, too, is a man of talent.

Pre.—Well, this is all very well, but what does it matter? There is that cursed incognito I can't get over. He will pop in all of a sudden with "You are here, my friend, are you? Who is the judge?" "Liapkin Tiapkin," says I. "Send Liapkin Tiapkin here," says he. "And who looks after the hospitals?" "Zemlianka," says I. "Oh, send him here, too!" That's the mischief of it.

Enter the Postmaster.

Postmaster.—Tell me, gentlemen, what is this official coming here for?

Pre.—Haven't you heard?

Post.—Yes, sir; I heard of it from Peter Ivanovitch Bobchinsky, who was with me at the post office a moment ago.

Pre.—Well, come; what do you think about it?

Post.—What do I think? I think that it means war with the Turks.

Ammos.—By Jove! that is just what I thought, too.

Pre.—Oh, you both found a regular mare's nest.

Post.—It is a fact—with the Turks, I say, and it is France that does all the mischief.

Pre.—What humbug you are talking! War with the Turks! Stuff and rubbish! We shall get it hot, not the Turks. I have got a letter.

Post.—Well, then, there is not going to be war with the Turks, I suppose.

Pre.—Ivan Kismitch, what do you think about it all?

Post.—What do I think? What do you think, Anton Antonovitch?

Pre.—What do I think? I am not much afraid, just a little anxious; it is the shopkeepers and the townspeople that

trouble me; they say that I put them through their facings, but heaven be my witness, if I have taken a trifle or so from any one, it was all done without any malice. I say (leading him aside), I have just been thinking whether there has not been some report or other made against me. Why, if you come to think of it, should an inspector be sent here at all? Look here, Ivan Kismitch, this is a matter that concerns us all; could not you just manage to unseal somehow and read every letter that enters the post office, both coming and going and see if by chance it contains any report or correspondence about us in it? If not, you can seal it up again, and then deliver it, or simply deliver it open.

Post.—Oh, you need not tell me how to carry on a post office; I know all about it; don't teach your grandmother; I open every letter as it is, not so much as a precaution, but out of pure curiosity; I am always dying to know what is going on in the world; I tell you, I get some interesting reading. I keep some letters for the simple pleasure of reading them; such descriptions of various occurrences! highly edifying, I can tell you; much better than the "Moscow Gazette."

Pre.—Well, tell me, then, have you read anything about an official coming from St. Petersburg?

Post.—No, nothing about a Petersburg official, but plenty about the officials of Kostroma and Saratoff. I declare it is a pity you don't read these letters; there are some first-rate things in them. Not long ago, for instance, a young subaltern wrote to his friends describing a ball and all the larks he had. It was grand. "My dear friend," he said, "my life is simply heavenly: lots of girls, bands always playing, and uniforms all over the shop." He put his whole heart into this letter, I can tell you. I kept it on purpose; shall I read it to you?

Pre.—Oh, no; I don't care; I have no time for it now; but look here, Ivan Kismitch, if by any chance a report or complaint should happen to go in, don't hestitate a moment, but lay hands on that and keep it.

Post.—Of course I will, with the greatest pleasure.

Ammos.—You had better look out, my friend; you will come to grief some day over this.

Post.—Oh, never fear.

Pre.—It is all right, all right! It would be a different matter altogether if you were to make any public use of it; but as it is, it is merely a private affair.

Ammos.—Well, we have got into a mess somehow. But look here, Anton Antonovitch, what I really came for to-day was to make you a present, a nice little puppy, own sister to the dog you know. You heard, of course, that Chiptovitch has gone to law with Vachovinski, and I am having a rare good time of it. I get coursing over the grounds of both defendant and plaintiff.

Pre.—My dear fellow, don't bother me about your coursing now. It is that cursed incognito that haunts me like a nightmare; I can't get it out of my head. I expect every moment that the door will fly open and in will walk——

Enter Bobchinsky and Dobchinsky at a rush, tumbling over each other in their anxiety to get their story out.

Bobchinsky.— } (Together.) { Marvellous event!
Dobchinsky.— } { Extraordinary news!

All.—What is it, what is it?

Dob.—Something utterly unforeseen. We come to the inn——

Bob.—We come to the inn, Peter Ivanovitch and I——

Dob.—Peter, don't; do let me tell the story.

Bob.—No, let me; you can't tell stories a bit.

Dob.—You will make a mess of it, and leave out half of it.

Bob.—I won't; I remember it all perfectly, I swear; don't interrupt me; do let me tell it; don't interfere. Gentlemen, kindly tell Peter not to interfere with me.

Pre.—Well, tell us what is it, for heaven's sake; I feel quite bewildered. Sit down, sit down; take a chair. Here, you sit here; now, then, what is it?

Bob.—All right, gentlemen, I will tell you everything as it happened. No sooner had I had the pleasure of leaving you after your honor had been pleased to be disturbed by the letter you had received; yes, well, then at once—now don't interrupt me, Peter; I know it all quite well—yes, off I ran, be pleased to take

note, to Karobkin; did not find Karobkin at home, so I went off to Rastakovsky; found Rastakovsky out, so off I went to Ivan Kismitch, here, to tell him the news you have received. Well, I was just going there, when I met Peter, here.

Dob.—Near the stall where they sell pies.

Bob.—Yes, near the stall where they sell pies. Well, yes, I met Peter there, and I said to him: "Have you heard the news which Anton Antonovitch has just received from a trustworthy source?" And it appears Peter had heard of it from your housekeeper, Avdotia, who had been sent, I don't know why, to Philip Antonovitch's house.

Dob.—Yes, for a little keg to put some French brandy into.

Bob.—(Thrusting him off.) Yes, for a little keg to put French brandy into. Well, we were coming, Peter and I, to Pochechueff's house—don't interrupt me, Peter; how tiresome you are! don't interrupt; do keep still—well, we were going to Pochechueff's house, and on the way Peter says, "Let us go to the inn;" says he, "there is a vacuum in my stomach; I have eaten nothing since the morning, and I have got quite a stomach-ache." So Peter's stomach, you see—and says he, "I hear that they received some fresh salmon at the inn, so we will go there and have a little lunch." We had hardly entered the inn, when we saw a young man.

Dob.—A good-looking young fellow, not in uniform.

Bob.—Yes, a good-looking young fellow, not in uniform, walking up and down the room like this. (Suiting the action to the word.) And there was a kind of thoughtfulness, there was something in his face, his manners, and here (touching his forehead) there was all that kind of thing, don't you know? I suspected something at once, and I said to Peter, "Hallo! there is something a little out of the common here." Yes, and Peter beckoned to the landlord: you know him; that fellow Vlas; his wife was confined about three weeks ago—such a fine, sturdy boy, he will keep an inn some day, like his father. Well, Peter beckoned to Vlas and asked him in a whisper, "Who is that young fellow?" he says, and to this Vlas answers, "That young fellow," says he—Oh, don't interrupt me, Peter, don't interrupt me; you could not tell the thing yourself, you lisp so; you have got a tooth that whistles—"Well," says he,

Vlas, you know, I mean, "that young fellow," says he, "is an official, he is from St. Petersburg, his name is Ivan Alexandrovitch Chlestakoff; he is going to the Saratoff district," says he, "and he has a queer way of recommending himself. He has been here a fortnight, never leaves the inn, tells me to put down everything in the bill, doesn't pay a farthing for anything." When he told me this it all flashed across me in a moment. "Whew!" says I to Peter.

Dob.—No, Peter, I said "Whew!"

Bob.—Well, first of all you said "Whew!" and then I said "Whew!" "Whew!" said I to Peter; "what is he here for when he is going to the Saratoff district? Yes, indeed." Well there you have this very official.

Pre.—Who? what do you mean? What official?

Bob.—The official you got the letter about—the inspector.

Pre.—(In terror.) What do you mean? Gracious heaven this can't be the man?

Dob.—It is, it is! He pays for nothing, and he stays here. Who else can it be? And his road pass is made out for Saratoff.

Bob.—By Jove, I tell you it is the very man; he is so sharp, he looks into everything. He saw we were eating salmon, Peter and I, chiefly, you know, because Peter's inside was not—well, he looked into our plates; I assure you, I nearly fainted with fright.

Pre.—The Lord have mercy upon us, miserable sinners! What room has he got?

Dob.—He is in No. 5, under the staircase.

Bob.—The same room that the two officers had a fight in last year on their way through.

Pre.—Has he been here long?

Dob.—A fortnight; he came on St. Basil's Day.

Pre.—A fortnight. (Aside.) Holy saints and martyrs bring me safely out of this! During this last fortnight I have had the non-commissioned officer's wife flogged—the prisoners have had no provisions served out to them, and the pot-houses and the streets, they are simply like a gin-shop—filthy beyond

anything. Oh! it is an awful business, this; I swear it is perfectly awful. (Clutches his hair.)

Art.—Well, Anton Antonovitch, shall we all set out for the inn in martial array?

Ammos.—No, we must go in due order, headed by the Mayor, then the Clergy, then the Merchants' Guilds. In the works of John Mason——

Pre.—No, no; leave it all to me. I have been in as bad scrapes as this in my life, and have got out of them and have even got thanks for my admirable conduct. Maybe heaven will not abandon me now. (Turning to Bob.) So you say he is a young fellow, eh?

Dob.—Yes, about 23 or 24, not much more.

Pre.—Well, all the better, you can easily get over a young man. It would be a job if he were some old devil of a fellow, but a young man, why, he is all on the surface. Well, gentlemen, you go and get your departments into order, and I will go there alone with Peter here, but only quite privately you know, for a stroll, just to find out if the travellers are properly treated in the inn. Hallo there, Swestunoff!

Swes.—What do you want?

Pre.—Go at once for the District Police Inspector. No, wait a bit, I want you here. Just tell some one to send me the District Police Inspector as quickly as possible and then come here.

Art.—Let us go, Ammos Theodrovitch, some misfortune may really happen.

Ammos.—What are you afraid of? Put clean nightcaps on to your patients, then you are all right.

Art.—Nightcaps, indeed, the orders are to give the patients oatmeal soup, but there is such a smell of cabbage all through the corridors that you have to hold your nose.

Ammos.—Well, I am all right at all events, I have not got to worry. Who would ever dream of coming into the Sessions Court House; and if any one does, and looks into some file of papers, he would have a bad time of it, I can tell you. Here have I been sitting 15 years on the Judge's Bench, and when I glance at a report, ha! ha! I give it up. Solomon himself

could not tell what was true and what were lies in those reports.

(Exeunt Ammos, Luka, Art., Chris., and Postmaster.)

Pre.—Now, then, is the droschky ready?

Ord.—All ready, sir.

Pre.—Go into the street; no, stay: yes, go and fetch—where are the rest of the fellows? You can't surely be here alone. I ordered Prokaroff to be here as well, where is he?

Ord.—Prokaroff is in a private house, but he is not able to attend to duty.

Pre.—What do you mean?

Ord.—I mean what I say. He came home dead drunk this morning. They emptied a couple of buckets of water over him, but it is of no use, he is not come to yet.

Pre.—Good God, what shall I do? Well, you go into the street then; no, wait a bit—run first to my room, and get my sword and my new hat. Now, then, Peter, let us be off.

Bob.—Me too, me too, let me come too, Anton Antonovitch.

Pre.—No, no, it is impossible, it would not do, and besides there is no room for you in the droschky.

Bob.—Never mind, I will come; I shall manage somehow; I will run behind. If I can only have a look at him through a crack in the door, and see how he behaves; these wonderful manners of his they talk about.

Pre.—Run at once and collect the head Dvorniks; let each one take———Now look at that sword, it is all scratched; that cursed shop-keeper Abdulin, he sees that his Prefect has got an old sword and he doesn't bring me a new one; cunning rascals, the scoundrels! with their petitions always ready under their coats. Tell each man to take a street in his hand—what the devil am I talking about, a street in his hand—a broom in his hand I mean, and sweep the streets that lead to the inn, and sweep it clean, do you hear, you rogues? I know you; you make cupboard love, and stuff away the silver spoons into your boots. Just look out or I will be down on you pretty sharp. What did you do with the merchant Tchernaieff, eh? He gave you a couple of yards of cloth for your uniform and

you charged for the whole piece. Just you look out; you swindle above your rank; off with you, you thief.

Enter Superintendent of Police.

Pre.—Hallo! Stefan Illitch, where the devil have you been? What is the meaning of this?

Ins.—I—I was there; just outside the gates.

Pre.—Well, look here; an official from St. Petersburg has just come. How have you arranged?

Ins.—Carried out your orders, sir; I have sent an orderly with the dvorniks to clean the pavements.

Pre.—Where is Derjimorda?

Ins.—He has gone to man the fire engine.

Pre.—And Prokaroff is drunk, eh?

Ins.—Yes, sir.

Pre.—How came you to allow him to get like that?

Ins.—I don't know how it happened. There was a row outside in the town yesterday, and Prokaroff went there to restore order, and came back drunk.

Pre.—Well, look here, this is what you must do. The Lieutenant is of good height, so he had better stand on the bridge to keep order there, and tell them to sweep down that paling, that one by the shoemaker's shop, and tell them to stick up a pole with a wisp of straw on the top as if some surveying was going on. The fact is, the more dilapidated the place is, the more it proves the energy of the Town Prefect. By Jove! I forgot, they have gone and shot about forty cartloads of rubbish against that very paling. What a beastly town this is! As soon as you go and put up some memorial, or simply a paling, all sorts of rubbish get shot against it. The devil only knows where it all comes from, and if this Petersburg official should ask the policemen if they are contented, just you mind that every man-jack of them says, "Yes, your worship, we are perfectly contented." Just let me catch anyone saying he is discontented, and I will give him something to be discontented about afterwards. (Sighs deeply.) Ah! I have been to blame—much to blame—heaven grant only that I get out of this

mess quickly, and with flying colors, and I will give the finest candle to the church that has ever been given. I will make each beast of a grocer give me 100 pounds of wax for the purpose, see if I don't! O Lord! O Lord! Well, come on, Peter. (In his flurry takes up the case containing his cocked hat, and puts it on his head.)

Ins.—Anton Antonovitch, that is the hat box, not the hat.

Pre.—Oh, the devil! (Throws it down.) If this Inspector should happen to ask whether the church belonging to the hospital, for which a sum of money was assigned five years ago, you know what I mean—well, if he wants to know why it is not built, don't forget to say that we did begin it, but it was destroyed by fire. I made a report to this effect. Otherwise some one will forget and play the fool, and say it was never begun at all, mind that. And tell Derjimorda not to use his fists too freely for the sake of order. He makes every one see stars all round—innocent as well as guilty. Well, Peter, let's be going. (Goes out and returns.) And whatever you do, don't let the soldiers go out in the streets with nothing on. These wretched militiamen will put on nothing but a uniform coat over their shirt with no trowsers at all. Dirty brutes!

(Exeunt Omnes.)

Enter Anna Andreevna and Maria Antonovna.

Anna Andreevna.—Here, I say, where are they? Here, husband, Anton, Anton. It is all your fault, Maria, it is always you; you must go and dawdle, "I want a pin," "I want a fichu," "wait a moment," that's the way you go on. Anton, where are you? Has he come? The Inspector, has he got a moustache? What kind of moustache?

Pre.—(Outside.) I will tell you all about it soon, my dear.

Anna.—Soon, indeed, I like that! I don't want to know soon. I only want to hear one word. Is he a Colonel, eh? Why, he is gone. Oh, I will pay him out for this! It is all you, Maria. "Mamma, wait a moment, I want to pin my fichu behind, I will be with you in half a second." This is your half a second, is it? All owing to you that we have not heard anything. It is all that vain, flirting way you have got. She hears that the postmaster is here, and behold! we must look at our-

selves in the glass, and walk up to it first for this side, then for that. She imagines he is paying court to her, and he simply makes a face at her the moment she turns round.

Maria Antonovna.—But really, mamma, it can't be helped; we shall know all about it in a couple of hours.

Anna.—In a couple of hours; thank you kindly, Miss, much obliged for the answer; why didn't you say in a couple of months? We shall know still better then. Avdotia, did you hear? Well, has anyone come, didn't you hear? What a fool. She waves her arms. Let her wave! You might have asked him about it all the same. Could not tell, couldn't you, you flat-headed thing, thinking of nothing but lovers. Eh, what's that? They drove off so fast, eh? Well, you might have run after the droschky; be off at once, do you hear? Run and make inquiries where they have gone to, find out thoroughly who has come, and what sort of man he is, do you hear? Look in at the key-hole; find out everything, what kind of eyes he has got, whether they are dark or not, and come back again this minute, do you hear? Quick! Look sharp! (Goes on calling, till the curtain falls.)

ACT II.

SCENE.—A badly furnished Room in a Country Inn.

Ossip alone, lying on his master's bed.

Ossip.—The devil take it! how hungry I am. There is a rumbling inside me as if a whole regiment of trumpeters were in full swing, and we shan't reach home not by a long way. Two months ago since we left St. Petersburg; spent all his money on the road. Now he sits with his tail twisted under him and cools down generally. We had lots of money for the journey, more than enough, but no—he must needs swagger in every town we came to. (Imitating him.) "Hallo, Ossip," says he, "get me the best room, and order me the best dinner they can serve up, I can't stand a bad dinner, I want the best they can manage." That's the way we go on. If it was for anyone that was worth the while, well and good. But what's the good of swaggering before a postoffice clerk. Then he

scrapes an acquaintance with the first traveller he meets. Out come the cards, then the whole thing bursts up. Oh, I am sick of this life; I swear, it is better to be in the old village; there is not so much society certainly, but at the same time there is less trouble. You may lie on a bench all day long and eat pies. No one, of, course, can deny, if the truth must be told, that the Petersburg life is the best of all. If only you have money then the life is fine: theatres, dancing dogs, everything you want. Everyone talks so politely. Dukes and princes could not talk better. You go into the market, the shopkeepers call out "Your Honor." If you go into a ferry boat, you might happen to sit next to a Government Official. If you want society, go into the shops, and you will find a Life-Guardsman talking about the camp, and explaining every star in heaven till you can see them as plain as the palm of your hand. Then some officer's wife will be gossiping, and such a lovely chambermaid looks in, such splendid manners; the devil take it! you never hear a rude word! Everyone calls you "Sir." If you are tired of walking, you can call a cab, and there you can sit like a gentleman, and if you don't want to pay you need not—every house has got a back door. You just slip out of that, and the devil himself could not find you. One thing is bad, sometimes you eat until you can't eat any more, and at others you are ready to split with hunger—as I am now, for instance. It is all his fault. What can I do with him? The Governor sends him money, and instead of taking care of it, off he goes on the spree; drives about all the day in a cab; he must have a ticket for the theatre every day; and in a week it is all gone. Off I go to the old-clothes shop to sell his new coat. Sometimes he is cleaned out to his last shirt, so that he has nothing on his back but a jacket and an overcoat. All true, by Jove! such fine cloth, too, real English. He pays a hundred and fifty rubles for a single dress coat and then lets it go for twenty. As for his breeches, they simply fetch nothing at all, and this is all because he will not take to work. Instead of that, all the time goes on swaggering up the Nevsky Prospect and playing cards. If the old gentleman only knew, he would not care a rap for your being called an Official, he would up with your shirt, and smack you so that you would rub yourself for four days afterwards. If you go in for Government

Service, you must stick to it, that's what I say. Here's the landlord. He says, "I will not give you anything to eat till you have paid for what you have had," and what if we don't pay him? Ah! (Sighing.) O Lord! what wouldn't I give for a good basin of cabbage soup! I feel as if I could eat the whole world. Hallo! there's a knock, he is coming. (Gets up.)

Enter Chlestakoff.

Chlestakoff.—Here, take this. (Gives him cap and stick.) Now, then, you rascal you have been lying on my bed again!

Oss.—What should I lie on your bed for? Suppose I had never seen a bed before?

Chles.—You liar, you have been on it, just look, it is all in a mess!

Oss.—Well, what has that to do with me? I suppose I know what a bed is; I have got feet and I can stand on them; what do I want with your bed?

Chles.—Just look and see if there is any tobacco in my pouch.

Oss.—How on earth should there be any? You know you smoked the last bit four days ago.

Chles.—(Walks up and down, compressing his lips, then in a loud and decided voice.) Look here, Ossip.

Oss.—Well, what do you want?

Chles.—Just you go down there.

Oss.—Where?

Chles.—(Almost in entreaty.) You know—to the bar, and just tell them that I want my dinner.

Oss.—No, no! you don't catch me going down there.

Chles.—What are you grinning about, you fool?

Oss.—Well, it's all the same whether I go or not, you'll get nothing from the bar. The landlord said he was not going to give us any more dinner.

Chles.—How dare he refuse to give us dinner! What nonsense!

Oss.—And he says, too, that he will go to the Prefect and complain that a gentleman has been here a fortnight and has

not paid a farthing. "You and your master," he says, "are a couple of scamps; your master is a swindler, that's what he is. Lord bless you," says he, "we have seen lots of swindlers and rogues like him."

Chles.—And you think it rather good sport, you blackguard, to repeat all this to me!

Oss.—(Quoting.) "In this way," says he, "any one can come and stay on and you can't get rid of them. I am not going to stand this kind of joke any more. I am going right off to make a complaint and get him sent to the lock-up and jail," says he.

Chles.—That will do, you fool. I don't want to hear any more now; just you go down to the bar and tell him that I want my dinner. I never saw such an unmannerly dog as he is.

Oss.—Well, I had better ask the landlord to step up here himself, hadn't I?

Chles.—What the devil do I want with the landlord! Go yourself and tell him.

Oss.—All right, sir, but——

Chles.—Well, go and call the landlord then! Confound you! (Exit Ossip.)

Chles.—I say, it is an awful thing to feel hungry like this! I took a little walk in the hope that my appetite would go; not a bit of it, confound it! If only I hadn't played the fool at Penza I should have had lots of money to get home with. That line captain did me awfully; he had a most extraordinary knack of turning up the king, the beggar! We were only at it a quarter of an hour, and he cleaned me out completely. It was a regular do. But all the same, I would give anything to have another shot at him. However, there doesn't seem much chance of that. What a beastly little town this is; they won't give you anything on tick in the shops. It's simply disgusting! (Whistles a bit of "Robert the Devil," and breaks off into something else.) Well, no one seems to care about coming here.

Enter Ossip and the Waiter of the Inn.

Waiter.—The landlord has sent me to ask you what you want.

Chles.—Hallo! old fellow, how are you? Pretty well, eh?

Wait.—Yes, thanks.

Chles.—And how's business? Everything going on all right in the inn?

Wait.—Yes, thanks, all right.

Chles.—Lots of travellers, eh?

Wait.—Yes, fair number.

Chles.—I say, my good fellow, you haven't brought me my dinner yet, just tell them to hurry up; I have got some work to do directly after dinner.

Wait.—The landlord says he is not going to supply you any more. In fact, he thinks of going to-day to the Prefect to lodge a complaint.

Chles.—Why, what has he got to complain about, what humbug! Judge for yourself, my good friend. I shall simply die of exhaustion, I am most awfully hungry, I am speaking quite seriously, I can tell you.

Wait.—Can't help that. The landlord said he won't supply you with nothing more till he is paid for all you have had. That's what he said.

Chles.—Oh, just you talk him over: bring him to reason.

Wait.—What's the good of telling him all this?

Chles.—Explain to him seriously that I really require food. As for the money, oh! of course that will be all right, you know. He thinks I am like some infernal pheasant or other and can go a day or two without anything to eat. Nice idea that. (Exit Ossip and Waiter.)

Chles.—All the same, it is a bad look-out if he won't give me anything to eat at all. I never felt so hungry before in all my life. Shall I turn some of my clothes to account? Shall I sell my breeches? No! I am blessed if I will. I would rather starve than not come home with a Petersburg costume. What a nuisance Joachim didn't let me have a private carriage. It would have been grand to come home in a carriage—drive up straight to the steps of the house of some neighboring squire, with lamps burning and Ossip perched up behind in livery. By Jove! wouldn't I have astonished their

weak minds. "Hallo! whose turn-out is this?" they would all say, and a footman comes out in livery all over gold braid. "Ivan Alexandrovitch Chlestakoff from St. Petersburgh. At home, sir!" The clumsy lout does not even know what the phrase means "At home." When some dunder-headed country squire comes to pay a visit he blunders straight into the drawing-room like a bear. Then up I go to some pretty little daughter of the house, "Mademoiselle how charmed I am." (Spits.) I feel perfectly sick with hunger.

Enter Ossip and the Waiter.

Chles.—Well.

Ossip.—They're bringing dinner.

Chles.—Hurrah; hurrah!

Waiter.—The landlord says it's the very last time he'll ever supply you.

Chles.—Oh, the landlord be damned! What have you got there?

Wait.—Soup and joint.

Chles.—What! only two courses?

Wait.—That's all.

Chles.—Pretty state of things. I won't stand this. Ask him what the devil he means by it! This is nothing of a dinner.

Wait.—Well, the landlord says it's a great deal.

Chles.—Why, isn't there any sauce?

Wait.—No, there isn't any.

Chles.—But why not? When I passed the kitchen I saw them getting lots of things ready, and this morning when I was in the coffee-room, there were two dapper little fellows eating salmon and lots of other things.

Wait.—Well, there is some if you like, and yet there isn't.

Chles.—How do you mean, "there isn't?"

Wait.—Well, I mean there isn't any for you.

Chles.—Here, I want some salmon, some fish, and some cutlets.

Wait.—Oh, that's for them that pays.

Chles.—You scoundrel, you!

Wait.—Yes, sir!

Chles.—You damned little brute, you! Why should they have nice things to eat and not I? Why the devil shouldn't I have them, too? Ain't they simple travellers like myself?

Wait.—No, of course not. Every one knows that.

Chles.—What sort of people are they then?

Wait.—Why, ordinary kind of people, to be sure; they pay their bills and you don't.

Chles.—Well, I am not going to argue with an idiot like you. (Ladles out the soup and begins to eat.) What soup this is! You've just poured some water into a cup; there's no taste about it, only a bad smell. I won't have this soup, bring me another sort.

Wait.—All right, I'll take it away; the landlord says if you don't like it you can go without.

Chles.—(Protecting the soup-tureen with his hand.) No, no! Hold on, you fool! You don't humbug me like that. None of your larks, don't you try that on. O Lord! what a soup this is! I don't believe any one has ever eaten soup like this before, it has got feathers in it instead of fat! (Cuts off a piece of the fowl in the soup.) Oh! I say, what a tough old hen this is! Here, give me the joint. There's little soup left; take it for yourself, Ossip. (Cutting the joint.) What kind of joint is this? It is not a joint at all.

Wait.—Well, what is it then?

Chles.—Goodness only knows what it is. It is not a joint, that's all I know. I believe it is an axe warmed up instead of meat—the swindlers! This is the sort of thing they give people to eat—a single mouthful of it would make one's jaws ache. The scoundrels! It's just like the bark of a tree, one can't get it out of one's teeth anyhow. And it turns them quite black. (Wipes his mouth with a napkin.) Is there anything more coming?

Wait.—No, sir, nothing more!

Chles.—The damned scoundrels! If they had given me some sauce now, or some pastry; this is the way they fleece travellers, the rogues!

(Exit Waiter, struggling with Ossip for the remains of the dinner)

Chles.—I swear I feel as if I hadn't eaten anything, just whetted my appetite, that is all! If one had but a few coppers now just to send into the street, and buy a roll or something of that kind.

Enter Ossip.

Ossip.—I say, the Prefect has come here and is making inquiries and is asking about you.

Chles.—(In a fright.) Oh, the devil! It is all up! That brute of a landlord has gone and made his complaint already. I say, fancy if he really does drag me off to prison! Well, if they did it in a gentlemanly kind of way, I don't know if I should much mind. No, I am hanged if I will though. There are the officers and fellows lounging about the streets, and I have been putting on any amount of side, and am already on winking terms with the shopkeeper's daughter. No I won't go. What the deuce does he mean, indeed? How dare he? I am not a tradesman nor a mechanic to be treated like this. I will just have it out with him. I will say, "What do you mean, you——"

(During this scene Bobchinsky keeps gently opening the door and looking in, with a leer of immense curiosity.)

Enter Prefect and Dob.

Prefect.—(Trembling throughout.) I take the liberty of wishing you good morning!

Chles.—Much obliged, I am sure.

(At first he is alarmed, but gets bolder as the interview goes on, and he observes the Prefect's trepidation.)

Pre.—You will excuse me——

Chles.—No necessity.

Pre.—It is my duty as the head of this town to see that proper attention is paid to all travellers and distinguished people who honor us—hum! hum——

Chles.—Well, what was to be done? It is not my fault. I will pay up! I will really! They will send me money from the country. It's the landlord you ought to drop on, not me! He gives me such infernally tough beef, and as for his soup, heaven knows what he puts into that. I had to chuck it out of the window. He starves me for whole days, and as for the tea, it is such queer stuff, it smells of fish. Why should I—Pretty state of things!

Pre.—Really, I hope you will not blame me; it is really not my fault. I always see that they keep first-class meat in the market—it is brought by cattle dealers from Holmogonia, and they are sober, respectable men. I don't know where the landlords get such bad meat from, but if there is anything wrong, allow me to suggist that you should come with me to some other quarters.

Chles.—No, none of that! I know what you mean by "other quarters." You mean the jail. What right have you, how dare you! Do you know I am in the Government service at St. Petersburg, and I'll—I'll——

Pre.—(Aside.) Lord! What a temper he has got; he has heard of everything, those damned shopkeepers have told him all about me.

Chles.—I don't care, you may bring me your whole posse of constables if you like. I won't go. I will appeal straight to the Minister, I will. What do you mean, sir, what do you mean? (Thumps the table with his fists.)

Pre.—Oh! for Heaven's sake don't be angry with me! Have pity on me, on my wife, and my little ones. Don't bring me to ruin.

Chles.—I tell you I won't go, pretty thing, indeed! What have I got to do with it? Because you have got a wife and children I am to go to jail, eh? No, thank you, I won't go.

Pre.—(Trembling.) It was all my inexperience, I swear it was all owing to my inexperience, the inadequacy of my salary; be pleased to judge for yourself. The salary the government gives me doesn't suffice to buy tea and sugar, and if

there were a few bribes, they only amounted to a mere trifle, some little thing for the table, a suit of clothes or so. And as for the non-commissioned officer's wife who has taken to keeping shop, they say I flogged her; it is a base slander, I swear, a perfect libel; it is an invention of my enemies, evil-doers who are ready to make attempts on my very life.

Chles.—Well, what the deuce have I got to do with all that? I don't know what you are talking about, with your evil-doers and your non-commissioned officer's wife; a non-commissioned officer's wife is one thing—you may flog her if you like, but you daren't flog me; pretty joke, that. Take care what you are about; I will pay up, I tell you. I will pay up, all right. I have not got any money just at this moment; that's why I am stuck here, because I have not got a farthing in my pocket.

Pre.—(Aside.) Oh, a deep game, this. What a way he has gone about; what a precious mystification he has made! Who would have seen through it? One doesn't know how to take him! Well, it is time to make an attempt. Worth trying, at any rate; well, here goes. (Aloud.) If you are in any want of money or anything else, I am at your service at any moment; it is my duty to assist travellers.

Chles.—Well, lend me some money, then. Lend it to me, and I will pay off my bill here at once. Two hundred rubles would be enough, or even less.

Pre.—(Giving him money.) There are exactly two hundred rubles; don't trouble to count them.

Chles.—Many thanks; extremely obliged. I will send you the money from the country as soon as I get there. I see now you are a good sort of fellow. Now we're all right.

Pre.—(Aside.) Thank heaven he has taken the money. Now affairs will go on all right. I gave him four hundred instead of two hundred.

Chles.—Here, Ossip!

Enter Ossip.

Call the waiter here. Why do you stand, gentlemen? Pray be seated, pray be seated!

Pre.—Oh, no; we'd rather stand.

Chles.—No, sit down; do! I see now you are first-rate good fellows. I confess that I thought at first that your object in coming here was to take me to—— (To Dobchinsky.) Pray take a chair. (Prefect and Dobchinsky sit down.)

Pre.—(Aside.) I must be bolder; he evidently wants to keep up his incognito. All right, we will humor him; we will pretend that we have not the least idea who he is. (Aloud.) We were taking a walk on business, Peter Dobchinsky and I, and we looked in at the inn only to see if the travellers are being properly looked after; for I am not like some prefects, who don't look after things at all. I do it out of pure Christian charity. I go beyond my duty. I wish that every living soul should be properly received in this town. And now, as if in reward, chance has given me the pleasure of making such an agreeable acquaintance.

Chles.—I'm sure I am very pleased myself; if it hadn't been for you I should have had to stay here some time. I really didn't know how to pay my bill.

Pre.—(Aside.) Oh, that is good! he didn't know how to pay his bill. (Aloud.) Might I venture to ask what place you will be pleased to visit on leaving here?

Chles.—I am going to the Saratoff district, to my own place.

Pre.—To the Saratoff district. (Aside.) Ha! ha! he doesn't even blush. Oh, we must keep our weather eye open with this fellow. (Aloud.) You have undertaken a charming trip; as to the roads, now, on the one hand they say it is not pleasant, as one is often delayed in getting horses. Then, on the other hand, there is plenty of diversion. I take it you are travelling simply for your own good pleasure.

Chles.—No, my father has sent for me; the old man is annoyed that I have not got on well in the service at St. Petersburg; he has an idea that the moment you get there you get the Vladimir in your button-hole at once; that is not the case exactly. I should like to send him to cool his heels in the Home office.

Pre.—(Aside.) Oh, that is his dodge, eh? He works in even his old father. (Aloud.) Will you be pleased to be absent a long time?

Chles.—Really, I don't know. My father is as obstinate and stupid as a mule. I shall tackle him at once; I shall tell him plainly it is all very well, but I cannot live out of St. Petersburg. Why should I go and waste my existence among a lot of peasants? It is not good enough. My soul craves for something more festive.

Pre.—(Aside.) A fine story he has concocted; he tells lie after lie, and never breaks down; and such a wretched little fellow! One would think one could press the life out of him with one's finger-nails; but wait a bit—he will let out something soon. I will soon get him to talk more at large. (Aloud.) Your observation is perfectly correct. What can one do in the provinces? Now, just look at us here, for example: at night I can't sleep; I am always thinking about the duty I owe to my country; I spare nothing in my country's service, and heaven knows when I shall get the reward for it. It seems to me this room is a little damp, eh?

Chles.—It's a horrid room; the bugs—I have never seen such beasts; they bite like dogs.

Pre.—You don't say so! Dear! Distinguished guests to suffer, and from what? From some abominable bugs that never ought to have seen the light of day at all. And the room is rather dark, isn't it?

Chles.—Yes, dark as pitch; the landlord has a cheerful habit of not giving me any candles. Sometimes I want to do something—to read a bit, or I have a fancy to jot down something that has come into my head—and I can't do it, it is so dark, dark!

Pre.—Might I venture to ask you—but no, the honor would be too great.

Chles.—What?

Pre.—No, no, it is too much to ask, too much!

Chles.—What is it?

Pre.—Might I venture? I have got a charming room for you in my house, cheerful and quiet; but no—I really feel it to be too great an honor; pray forgive me. It is out of mere simplicity of heart that I venture to suggest such a thing.

Chles.—On the contrary, I should be delighted, I am sure. It would be much pleasanter in a private mansion than in this pot-house.

Pre.—Oh, how pleased I shall be! And my wife—how delighted she will be! That is just my character, to show hospitality. It always was from my childhood, especially to such distinguished persons as yourself. Don't think that this is flattery—oh, no! that is not one of my faults—I speak out of the fullness of my heart.

Chles.—Very much obliged, I am sure. I do like people who are not humbugs; there is something about you so nice and open-hearted, I really am delighted with. And really all I ask for is respect and devotion, devotion and respect.

Enter Waiter, followed by Ossip.

Waiter.—Were you pleased to send for me?

Chles.—Yes; bring the bill.

Wait.—Oh, I have given you the bill over and over again.

Chles.—I don't remember your damned bills. How much is it altogether?

Wait.—You were pleased to order dinner on the first day, then on the second you had a little salmon, and afterward everything was on tick.

Chles.—You fool! adding it all up again. What is the total?

Pre.—Pray don't trouble yourself about him; he can wait. (To Waiter.) Get out of this; get out; the money will be sent. (Threatens the Waiter, who bolts out.)

Chles.—Oh, well, of course, that is all right.

(Exit Waiter.)

Pre.—Would you like to inspect, now, some of the institutions of our town, such as the hospital and things of that kind?

Chles.—Well, what have you got in that line?

Pre.—You can see how these things are managed here—what admirable order everything is in.

Chles.—Oh, certainly, with pleasure. I am quite ready.

Pre.—And then, if you like, we might go to the district schools, and you will see how we look after education in this town.

Chles.—Certainly, certainly.

Pre.—And afterward you might like to inspect the convict prison and the jail, and see how we treat our criminals.

Chles.—No, no; why the jail? Much rather have a look at the hospital—like that better.

Pre.—Just as you please. Will you go in your own carriage, or will you come with me in my droschky?

Chles.—I had better go with you in your droschky.

Pre.—Now, then, Peter, there will be no room for you.

Dob.—All right; I will manage somehow.

Pre.—Look here. (To Dobchinsky.) You run as fast as you can lay legs to the ground, and take two notes—one to Zemlianka at the hospital, and one to my wife. (To Chlestakoff.) Might I venture to ask permission to write a line to my wife in your presence, just to enable her to get ready for our distinguished guest?

Chles.—Oh, by all means. Here is some ink. As to paper, I don't know. Could you write on that old bill?

Pre.—Yes, that will do. (Writes, and at the same time says to himself:) And then we will see how things go on after breakfast and after a good fat bottle of wine. Oh, we have got some old government Madeira, not much to look at, but it would make an elephant roll about on his pins. All I want to find out is what sort of a personage he is—what we have got to fear from him. (Bobchinsky looking in at the door; the door suddenly comes off its hinges, and he falls into the room on his face.)

Chles.—Hallo! I hope you have not hurt yourself anywhere!

Bob.—Oh, no, not a bit; nothing at all! Just rubbed the skin off my nose a bit, that is all! I will run to the doctor; he has got some plaster for this sort of thing. It will soon pass.

Pre.—(Shakes his finger at Bobchinsky, and says to Chlestakoff:) It's nothing! I beg most respectfully that you will do me the honor to accompany me. I will tell your servant to

take your luggage up to my house. Here, my good fellow, take your master's things up to the Prefect's house—any one will show you where it is. Now I am at your service. (To Bobchinsky.) You fool, couldn't you find some other place to tumble down in? But you must needs go and lie full length on the floor like I don't know what!

ACT III.

Scene.—A room in the Prefect's house.

Anna Andreevna and Maria Antonovna.

Anna.—Well, here we are waiting a whole hour, all owing to your ridiculous vanity. Are you quite dressed by this time, eh? Or do you want to go and fuss about your toilet again? One ought not to listen to her at all! How tiresome! Not a soul to be seen. As if on purpose to spite one, the whole place seems to have gone to sleep.

Maria.—Really, mamma, we shall hear all about it now in a couple of minutes. Avdotia must be back directly. I say, mamma, I say, there is some one coming—there, just at the end of the street!

Anna.—Where is some one coming? One of your stupid fancies again, I suspect. Well, yes, I see there really is some one coming. Who is it? He is short, and has got a frock coat on. Who can it be? What a nuisance it is! Who on earth can it be?

Maria.—Why, it's Dobchinsky, mamma.

Anna.—It is not Dobchinsky. Nonsense! You are always imagining something. It is not Dobchinsky at all. Here! you come here. Quick! Quick!

Maria.—It is Dobchinsky really, mamma!

Anna.—There you go on again. Anything to contradict. I tell you it is not Dobchinsky.

Maria.—Didn't I say so? There, mamma, now you see it is Dobchinsky.

Anna.—Oh, well, yes! I see now it is. What do you keep on disputing about it for? (To Dobchinsky.) Quick! make

haste! how slow you are! Well, where are they, eh? Shout out to me from there. It's all the same. I say, is he very stern, eh? Where is my husband, eh? How stupid he is! He won't tell us anything till he gets into the room.

Enter Dobchinsky.

Now for heaven's sake tell us. Ain't you ashamed of yourself? I trusted entirely to you. I thought at all events you were a decent sort of creature. The others have all rushed off, and you must needs run after them, and I have not heard a word of sensible explanation from any of them yet. Ain't you ashamed of yourself? Here have I stood godmother to your children, and this is the way you treat me!

Dobchinsky.—My dear friend, I tell you I have run for your sake until I am perfectly out of breath. My respects to you, Maria Antonovna.

Maria.—How are you, Peter Ivanovitch?

Anna.—Well, tell us now—tell us what is going on there.

Dob.—Anton Antonovitch has sent you this letter.

Anna.—Yes, but—but—tell us what sort of man is he. Is he a general?

Dob.—No, he is not a general, but I am sure he is every bit as good. Such education, such imposing manners he has got!

Anna.—Oh, then he is the very man they wrote about to my husband, eh?

Dob.—Of course he is the very man. We were the first to discover him—Peter Ivanovitch and I.

Anna.—Well, tell us all about it—do.

Dob.—Thank heaven, everything is going on first rate. At first he was disposed to be a little severe on Anton Antonovitch. Yes, indeed, he felt angry, complained of everything in the inn, said that he would not come to his house, that he was not going to be put in prison on his account. However, afterward, when he saw that it was really not Anton Antonovitch's fault, and with a little talking over, he changed his tone, and, thank heaven, everything went off capitally. They have gone now to inspect the hospital—though at first, indeed, the prefect

thought there really had been some secret report made against him. I declare I was rather afraid myself.

Anna.—What have you got to be afraid of? You are not in the service of the government.

Dob.—No, but still, you know, one is apt to feel alarmed when a great man like that speaks.

Anna.—What for? That is all rubbish. Tell us, what is he like? Is he old or young?

Dob.—A young fellow—quite a young fellow. Not more than twenty-three, but he talks quite like an old man. He says "Oh, certainly!" and "I will go there—and there—and there," all with such a lordly air. "I am fond of writing and reading," says he, "but am hindered in my work," says he, "because the room is rather dark."

Anna.—What is he like? Is he dark or fair?

Dob.—He is rather dark, with such flashing eyes, just like a wild animal's. One gets awfully confused under them.

Anna.—Well, we will see what my husband has to say for himself: "I hasten to tell you, my love, that things were going terribly badly with me, but now, trusting to the mercy of God for two salted cucumbers and half a portion of caviare, one ruble, twenty-five kopecks." I don't understand a word of it. What is he after with his salted cucumbers and his caviare?

Dob.—Oh! Anton Antonovitch wrote it on a dirty piece of paper in a hurry. This is some old bill.

Anna.—Ah, yes! I see; exactly. So it is! (Reads again.) "Trusting to the mercy of God, it seems now that everything will turn out all right. Make haste and get the spare room ready for a distinguished guest—the room with the yellow paper. You need not get anything extra for dinner, because we shall feed at the hospital with Artemie Phillipovitch, but get in some more wine, and tell the shopkeeper Abdulin to send the very best he has. If he does not, I will dig up his cellar for him. Good-bye, my love. Always your fond husband, Anton." Dear me! We must make haste. Who is there, Meeshka?

Enter Meeshka.

Dob.—Meeshka! Meeshka!

Anna.—Look here, Meeshka, run to Abdulin's shop—no, wait a moment; I will give you a line to him. (Writes.) There, give this note to Seedor, the coachman, and tell him to run to Abdulin's shop, and you go at once and get the room all ready for the guest. Put up the bed and the washstand and everything. (Exit Meeshka.)

Dob.—Well, I will run off now and see how they are getting on with their inspection.

Anna.—All right—off you go. I don't want to keep you. (Exit Dobchinsky.) Now, then, Maria, my dear, comes the business of the toilet. Remember he is a Petersburg swell. I only hope he won't see anything to laugh at in us. You had better wear your blue frock with the small flounces.

Maria.—Oh, mamma! Not the blue. I don't like it at all. Miss Liapkin Tiapkin always goes about in blue, and Zemlianikia's daughter, too. She's always in blue. Let me put on the frock with the flowery pattern.

Anna.—Flowery pattern, indeed! That's just like you! Never agree to anything I say. Just for the pleasure of contradicting! You had much better put on the blue, because I want to come out in my straw-colored dress. I do like that straw-colored dress so much.

Maria.—Oh, mamma! that doesn't suit you a bit.

Anna.—Doesn't suit me a bit, you say?

Maria.—No, not a bit. I will wager anything you like it does not. You want dark eyes to wear a dress of that color.

Anna.—Mighty fine! And do you mean to say that my eyes are not dark? I tell you they are—as dark as can be! What nonsense you are talking! How should they be anything else, when I always tell my fortune at cards by the Queen of Clubs?

Maria.—What, mamma? You generally go by the Queen of Hearts.

Anna.—You are talking perfect nonsense. I never have gone by the Queen of Hearts in my life. What an idea to get into your head all at once! The Queen of Hearts, indeed! I never heard such a thing. (Anna and Maria go out.)

Meeshka comes in on one side, and Ossip, carrying a portmanteau, on the other.

Ossip.—Which is the way?

Meeshka.—Here, old fellow, here!

Oss.—Hold on! Let's have a moment's rest. Oh! what a wretched life this is—when your inside's empty, every load seems heavy!

Mee.—I say, old chap, will the general be here soon?

Oss.—What do you mean by the general?

Mee.—Why, your master.

Oss.—My master! You think he is a general, eh?

Mee.—Isn't he?

Oss.—Oh, yes! He is a general—t'other way about.

Mee.—But is he more of a swell than a real general, or not?

Oss.—Oh! a lot more.

Mee.—Oh! that is it. Well, you have roused us up a bit.

Oss.—Look here, young man. I see you are a clever sort of fellow. Just get us something to eat.

Mee.—But there is nothing ready for you yet. You are too much of a swell to eat plain dishes, but when your master gets his dinner you will have yours.

Oss.—But what have you got in the way of plain dishes?

Mee.—Well, there is cabbage soup, porridge and meat pie.

Oss.—Oh! then, I say, just you give us some cabbage soup, porridge and meat pie. Never mind, I can eat anything. Here—just carry up the portmanteau. Is there any way out there?

Mee.—Yes. (Exeunt Ossip and Meeshka.)

Enter Chlestakoff, followed by the Prefect, Artemie Phillipovitch, Luka Lukitch and Bobchinsky.

Chlestakoff.—Capital hospital! I like your custom of showing the chief objects of interest in your towns to travellers. In other towns they didn't show me anything.

Prefect.—In other towns, I think I may venture to state, the authorities and officials are principally occupied in looking

after their own interests, whereas here I may fairly say that the only motive that actuates us is the hope of obtaining the favorable notice of the government by our good conduct and the attention we bestow on our public duties.

Chles.—That was a first-rate breakfast you gave me. I made a hearty meal. Is that the kind of thing you have every day?

Pre.—No; it was expressly prepared for our honored guest.

Chles.—I do like good feeding; that is what life was given to us for—to cull all the flowers of pleasure. What is the name of that fish?

Artemie.—Dried sturgeon.

Chles.—Remarkably tasty fish. Where was it we had breakfast? In the hospital, wasn't it?

Art.—Precisely so—in that charitable institution, the hospital.

Chles.—I remember. Of course there were lots of beds there. By the way, have all the patients got well? It seems to me there were not many of them there.

Art.—About ten—not more. The rest have all got well. That is owing to our admirable management and our excellent organization. From the very moment when I took charge of the institution, you would hardly believe it, all the patients began to die—get well, I mean to say—like flies. A sick man no sooner comes into the hospital than he is well at once, and this happy result is not so much due to the medicines we employ as to our watchful care and attentive management.

Pre.—I need hardly assure you how arduous are the duties which devolve on the head of the town. The charge of every conceivable department of public business, the cleaning, the repairing, the arranging—in a word, such a mass of duties as would almost drive the most able administrator to despair; but (lifting his eyes), thanks be to heaven, everything is carried on in the most satisfactory manner. Any other prefect in my position would be taken up with looking after his own profit; but, believe me when I tell you, I never lay me down to rest without thinking to myself—Gracious heavens! how shall I manage so that the government shall see my zeal in their ser-

vice and approve my efforts? Whether I am to be rewarded for my conduct or not, that, of course, I leave altogether in the hands of the government; but at all events, I have the reward of a clear conscience. When the town is all in perfect order, the streets swept, the prisoners well looked after, hardly any cases of drunkenness, what more can I want? Ah, well! I ask for no honors; they are no doubt pleasing to the recipient, but as compared with virtue they are but dust and ashes.

Art.—(Aside.) Oh, the scoundrel! Just listen to him romancing! I wish Providence had given me the gift of the gab like that!

Chles.—Yes, that's quite true! I must confess I rather like to dabble in literature, sometimes to throw off some little thing in prose, sometimes even in verse.

Bobchinsky.—What a just observation—most just, isn't it, Peter Ivanovitch? What magnificent remarks these are! He is evidently a scholar!

Chles.—But tell me—have you not got some amusements here? Clubs, or something like that, where one could have, for instance, a game of cards if one wanted to?

Pre.—(Aside.) Ha! ha! my friend, we know what you're after now. (Aloud.) No, indeed! Heaven forbid! Institutions of this sort have never been heard of here. I myself have never even had a card in my hand. I really have not the faintest idea how to play at cards. I can't even look on at card-playing without feeling quite pained; and if my eye happens to fall on such a thing as a King of Diamonds, or any other card, I feel so utterly disgusted that it revolts me. Once it happened I was amusing the children, and I built a house of cards, and the accursed thing haunted me in my dreams the whole night afterward. Good heavens! I often wonder how people can waste valuable time in such amusements!

Luka.—(Aside.) Oh, the villain! And he took a hundred rubles out of me last night at baccarat!

Pre.—No, indeed! I find better employment for all the time I can get in working in the interests of the State.

Chles.—Well, no, I think you are wrong there. It all depends on the way you look at the matter. If, for instance, you stop when you have got a good hand and ought to bet all you

know—well, that is, I daresay—but still I like a game of cards sometimes, I must admit.

Enter Anna and Maria.

Pre.—Allow me to present to you my family—my wife and daughter.

Chles.—How fortunate I am to have the opportunity of making your acquaintance, madam!

Anna.—It is a still greater pleasure for us to have the opportunity of welcoming so distinguished a personage as yourself.

Chles.—Excuse me, madam, quite the contrary; the pleasure is all on my side.

Anna.—How can you say so? How kind and complimentary you are! I beg you will take a chair.

Chles.—It is happiness for me even to stand near you. However, if you insist upon it, I don't mind sitting down. How delighted I am to find myself with you at last!

Anna.—Oh, really! I can't think that you can really mean that. After life at Petersburg you must have found travelling so disagreeable.

Chles.—Well, it is certainly awfully disagreeable. My usual life, comprenez vous, is in the gay world of fashion, and then all at once to find myself on the road, filthy inns dark as pitch; if it hadn't been for the happy chance that—this makes up for everything.

Anna.—But, indeed, you must find it very disagreeable.

Chles.—Nevertheless, madam, at present I am perfectly happy.

Anna.—Oh, really! I am sure you are too kind. It is too great an honor for us!

Chles.—Not at all! Nothing could be too great an honor for you.

Anna.—I live in the country, you see.

Chles.—Ah, well, the country, you know, has its hillocks, its streams—of course, you can't compare it with Petersburg! There is a life for you! Perhaps you think I am drawing on

my imagination. But I tell you it is not that. The chief of the department is on the most friendly terms with me. He will slap me on the back and say, "Come along, old fellow; come and dine!" So I just go to the office for a couple of minutes, just to give directions, don't you know, just to tell them how things are to be done, and so on. As for the writing, there is an official there, a mere office hack, a kind of animated pen—tr—tr, on he writes. They wanted to make me assistant chief, but I thought it was not good enough. Then the porter runs after me up the stairs with a brush in his hand, "Allow me, Ivan Alexandrovitch," says he, "to brush your boots." Gentlemen, why are you standing? Sit down, I beg of you.

Pre.— } (Together.) { We know our place better. We'd rather stand.
Art.— } { Thanks, we'll stand!
Luka.— } { Pray don't trouble yourself about us.

Chles.—Let us have no ceremony! I trust you will sit down. I don't like ceremony. On the contrary, I like to steal through the world unobserved; but one simply can't hide one's self. It is perfectly impossible. No sooner do I go out anywhere than I hear people saying, "There goes Ivan Alexandrovitch," and once they took me for the commander-in-chief, the sentries jumped out of the guard-house and presented arms. Afterward an officer, a great friend of mine, says to me, "I say, old fellow, do you know, we really took you for the commander-in-chief."

Anna.—Oh, I say; fancy that!

Chles.—I know all the leading actresses, and I have written vaudevilles, you know, and that sort of thing. I see a good deal of literary men. Pouschkin and I are like brothers. Sometimes I say to him, "Hallo, Pouschkin, old chap, how are you?" And he says, "Well, my boy, you know, so, so!" All that kind of thing, don't you know? He is a most original fellow!

Anna.—And so you are an author, too? How delightful it must be to be able to compose! I expect you write to the newspapers, don't you?

Chles.—Oh, yes, I write to the newspapers; but, indeed, I have written so many things—"Norma," "Figaro," "Robert le Diable," all little things of my own, and a lot more. I really can't remember their names. It's all as it were by chance. I don't want to write anything, but the managers of the theatres come to me and say, "Look here, old fellow, you simply must write something." And somehow or other, in a single evening, as it were, the whole thing gets written. Wonderful flow of ideas I have got. You know the works published under the name of Baron Brambeus: these are all mine.

Anna.—You don't say so! Only fancy that! Are you really Baron Brambeus?

Chles.—Oh, yes! I revised all those works. The publishers gave me a trifle of forty thousand rubles for them.

Anna.—Tell me, did you write "Youriee Miroslavsky?"

Chles.—Yes, that's a little thing of mine.

Anna.—I guessed as much at once.

Maria.—Oh, mamma! Why, it's put on the title page that it's by Zagoskin.

Anna.—There you go again. I knew you'd find something to dispute about before long.

Chles.—Of course! Oh, that is quite true. Zagoskin did write one "Youriee Miroslavsky," and I wrote another.

Anna.—Yes, I thought so! And it was yours that I read. How well it is written!

Chles.—I confess I am a great hand at literature. Then there is my house. The best in Petersburg. Every one knows it. Ivan Alexandrovitch's house. I trust, gentlemen, that if ever you will come to Petersburg you will all come and look me up. I give balls there, too.

Anna.—Ah, I can imagine how perfectly tasty and splendid they must be!

Chles.—Fact, I assure you! On the table, for instance, there will be a watermelon costing a trifle of seven hundred rubles. The soup comes by steamer in a saucepan straight from Paris. You take off the cover—the steam of it is delicious—nothing like it in the world. I go out to balls every day. Then we have arranged little whist parties. The Minis-

ter for Foreign Affairs, the French Ambassador, the German Ambassador and myself. Oh, the jokes and fun we have at play! I tell you there is nothing like it. Then I just run upstairs to my apartments on the fourth floor, call out for the cook, "My overcoat, Mary"—what am I talking about, the fourth floor! Why, I am actually forgetting that I live on the first floor—why, the staircase alone cost me—yes, and then you should just look in at the entrance hall before I am up in the morning. Counts and princes jostling each other and murmuring like so many bees; all you can hear is buzz, buzz; sometimes the minister—I should tell you that they always address my letters as Your Excellency. I even took charge of the department once. Curious thing! Director had gone away, no one knew where; of course there were rumors and gossip as to who was to take his place. Numbers of generals willing enough—doesn't exactly do—easy enough at first sight—but when you come to look into it, the very devil! Well, nothing for it but to send for me. Couriers after couriers coming; imagine to yourselves thirty-five thousand couriers alone all waiting. "What is the matter?" I ask. "Ivan Alexandrovitch," they say, "you must go and take charge of the department." I confess I didn't quite like the job. I went out in my dressing gown and wanted to refuse. But I thought, "Well, all this will come to the emperor's ears, and it will be put in my record of service." "Very well, gentlemen," I said, "I will take charge, but I warn you, look out what you are about. I am all there; you'll find that I am down on you." Well, so it turned out! I go through the office like an earthquake, simply. Every one trembling and quivering before me like a leaf. Oh! I tell you, gentlemen, there is no humbug about me. I gave it them hot all round. Even the Council of State is afraid of me. That's the sort of man I am. I am no respector of persons. I tell them all, "I know your little games, all of them; I am all there." I go to the palace every day. I expect to-morrow they will make me a field marsh—— (Slips gradually down from his chair; is respectfully supported by the surrounding officials.)

Pre.—(Trembling in every limb, and hardly able to speak.) You, you—your ex——

Chles.—What'sh matter?

Pre.—You—you—your ex——

Chles.—Can't unshtand a word—all rot!

Pre.—You—you—your ex—excellency, would not—you—would your excellency like to lie down? Your room is ready. Everything you want——

Chles.—All rot. Lie down? Well, all right, if you like, I will go and lie down. Your breakfast, genlemen, shplendid—very pleazhed—very pleazhed—dried sturgeon. (Reels off into side room, Prefect after him.)

Bob.—There, Peter Ivanovitch, there's a man for you! That is what I call a man. Never in my life have I been in the society of a great man like that! I nearly died of fright. What rank should you think he held, Peter Ivanovitch?

Dob.—I think he must be very near a general.

Bob.—Well, I think a general is not a patch on him; so if he is a general, he must be a generalissimo at least! Did you hear how he dropped on the Council of State? Let us make haste and tell Ammos Thedorovitch and Karobkin. Good-bye, Anna Andreevna.

Dob.—Good-bye, gossip.

Art.—(To Luka Lukitch).—It is simply awful, I declare, though I could not tell you why; and here, where are we? Not even in uniform. I only trust he will not make a report to St. Petersburgh about that as soon as he wakes. Good-bye, madam.

(Exeunt omnes, except Maria and Anna.)

Anna.—Oh, what a delightful man!

Maria.—A darling creature!

Anna.—But what polished manners! You can see at once that he is a Petersburg gentleman—his ways and all his—— How delightful! I do love young fellows like him, I declare I do, to distraction! I noticed he kept looking at me all the time.

Maria.—Oh, mamma! He kept always looking at me!

Anna.—Looking at you, indeed! There you go with your nonsense! Who ever heard of such a thing?

Maria.—It is quite true, mamma; he did look at me.

Anna.—Oh, there you go on! Heaven defend us! Anything for a dispute! But I have had enough of it. What should

he look at you for? What on earth should make him look at you?

Maria.—He did, mamma, the whole time, all the same. When he was talking about literature he looked at me, and then when he was describing how he played at whist with the ambassadors he looked at me again.

Anna.—Oh, I dare say just once in a way; I dare say he said to himself, "Poor little thing! I suppose I must bestow a glance upon her now for a change."

Enter Prefect.

Prefect.—Hush! hush!

Anna.—What is it?

Pre.—I am rather sorry I have made him drunk. Suppose that even only half of what he said is true—but it may be all true; when a man is drunk, out comes everything—every blessed thing he blurts out. Of course we know some of it was lies. No man can speak long without lying to some extent. But still he plays cards with the ministers and goes to court. I declare, the more one thinks of it—devil take it!—the more puzzling it is. One feels simply like a man on the bell-tower, or as if one was going to be hanged.

Anna.—Well, for my part, I don't feel in the least afraid of him; I simply regard him as a cultivated, well-bred man of the world. His rank is nothing to me.

Pre.—Oh, you women! That is just like a woman. When you have said that, you have said all. Everything is fiddle-faddle to women. Something suddenly sets them raving for no earthly reason. You thrash them, and, by Jove! the next moment they have forgotten the very existence of their husbands. My dear, you treated that young man with as much freedom as if he had been some Dobchinsky or other.

Anna.—Oh, don't worry yourself about that! We know something that—— (Looking at Maria.)

Pre.—Well, it is no use talking to you. It is a queer go, anyhow. As yet I have hardly been able to open my eyes from fright. Meeshka, call the orderlies here. Derjimorda and Swestunoff are somewhere near outside. (After a slight pause.)

It is wonderful how things go in the world nowadays. If people were something to look at it would not so much matter; but a whipper-snapper like this—how is one to tell what he is? A soldier you know by his bearing, and as soon as he puts on a frock coat he is like a fly with his wings cut off. He lay so close for ever so long and made such extraordinary lying stories. It seemed as if it might take a century to get to the bottom of it all, and now, at last, he has let it all out with a run and has told us even more than is necessary. He is evidently very young, very young and green.

Enter Ossip.

(All through this scene, the Prefect is continually dragging his wife and daughter away from Ossip to the other end of the stage, and they continually return and interrupt again.)

Anna.—Come here, my good man.

Pre.—Hush! hush! What is the matter? He is asleep.

Ossip.—No, he is still stretching himself.

Anna.—Look here! What is your name?

Oss.—Ossip, mum.

Pre.—N—that'll do—that'll do! (To his wife.) Well I hope, my good fellow, they have treated you very well. (To Ossip.)

Oss.—Thank you kindly, sir, they have treated me very well.

Anna.—Tell us; I suppose a great many counts and princes come to see your master, eh?

Oss.—(Aside.) What is she after? Well, if they feed me well this time, perhaps they will feed me still better if I answer aright. (Aloud.) O yes, lots of counts.

Maria.—Dear Ossip, what a delightful man your master is.

Anna.—But tell me, Ossip, how does he——

Pre.—O, do be quiet—do, please! You only bother me with your stupid interruptions. Look here, my good fellow.

Anna.—What kind of rank does your master hold?

Oss.—Why, the usual kind of rank, you know.

Pre.—Oh, good heavens! You go on with your stupid questioning; you won't let me put in a word on business. Look here, my good fellow, what kind of a man is your master? Is he severe, or does he like to make things hot for one, or how?

Oss.—Yes. He likes to have everything in order—everything correct.

Pre.—There is something about your face that I like very much. I should think you were a good fellow. Now what——

Anna.—Look here, Ossip, when your master is in St. Petersburg, does he wear uniform or——

Pre.—Oh! do shut up with your nonsense; this is a rather important business matter which is going on here. A man's life depends on it. Now look here, my good fellow, it really is a fact that I like your face uncommonly. On the road I dare say you would not object to an extra cup of tea. It is cold now travelling. Here's a couple of rubles to get your cup of tea with.

Oss.—Thank your honor, I am much obliged. I am a poor man and your honor has helped me.

Pre.—O don't mention it. I am very pleased to do it. And now, my good man, what——

Anna.—Ossip, do tell us what kind of eyes does your master like best?

Maria.—Dear Ossip, what a love of a nose your master has got!

Pre.—Do shut up! Leave it to me. Look here, my good man, what does your master usually pay most attention to on the way? What is his particular fancy, I mean?

Oss.—Well, he likes as it happens according to circumstances, but what he looks out for more than anything else is that he should be well received himself and well fed.

Pre.—He likes good feeding, eh?

Oss.—Yes. I am only a poor serf, but still he is careful that I should be well fed, too. We got off somewhere. "Well Ossip," says he, "did they feed you well?" "No, your excellency," says I, "they didn't." "Ah, Ossip," says he, "he is a

bad host," says he, "that's what he is. Just remind me when we reach——" Ah, thinks I to myself, God be with him, I am a simple sort of man.

Pre.—All right—all right! You speak to the point. I gave you a trifle before to buy a cup of tea. Here is a trifle more to get a little mutton with.

Oss.—Oh! really your worship, I have done nothing to deserve it. Well, I will drink your honor's health.

Anna.—Come here, Ossip, I will give you something too.

Maria.—Ossip dear, kiss your master——

Pre.—For heaven's sake do stop your noise. Go to your rooms; you have talked enough.

Anna.—Come along, Maria, I have got something to tell you about our guest that can only be told when we are alone.

Pre.—Oh! talk away as much as you like. I don't want to hear, I will close my ears if you like. Now then, my good man——

Enter Derjimorda and Swestunoff.

Hush! You come trampling in with your heels like blundering bears, stumping along just like throwing a ton weight from a cart. What the devil brought you here?

Derjimorda.—In accordance with orders. (In a harsh voice.)

Pre.—Hush! How the raven croaks! According to orders, indeed! The words flow out from him as if they were coming out of a barrel. (To Ossip.) Well, my good friend, you go and get things ready there and ask for anything there is in the house; and you (to Derj. and Swes.) stand on the threshold and don't stir from the spot. Don't let anybody in the house, and especially shopkeepers. If you let in a single one, I'll——. The moment you get a glimpse of any one with a petition or even if he hasn't got a petition, if only he looks like a man who wanted to bring a petition against me, take him by the scruff of his neck and shove him out and kick him well, do you hear? Hush! hush!

ACT IV.

SCENE—The same.

Present Ammos Thedorovitch, Artemie Phillipovitch, the Postmaster, Luka Lukitch, Dobchinsky, and Bobchinsky, all in full uniform.

Ammos.—For heaven's sake, gentlemen, look sharp there! Stand all round in a circle in proper order! The Lord be with him! He goes to court and slangs the council of state! Put yourselves in military array. I insist on military rank and file. Peter Ivanovitch, you stand there.

Art.—As you please, Ammos. We shall have to do something, I suppose, eh?

Ammos.—But what are we to do?

Art.—As if we didn't all know.

Ammos.—What; grease his palm, eh?

Art.—Well, yes, grease his palm; something of that kind. He is dangerous—he might exclaim; he is a statesman; you might put it perhaps in the shape of a tribute of respect from the gentry—a memorial of some sort.

Post.—We might say, "Here is some money come by post and we don't know whom it belongs to."

Ammos.—You look out he doesn't send you posting further than you like. Look here! This is not the kind of way things are managed in respectable countries. What's the use of a whole squadron of us coming on him? We must introduce ourselves one by one in private, you know. Why, it's all as it should be, but mum's the word. That's the way things are done in polite society. You lead the way, Ammos Thedorovitch!

Ammos.—You had better. It was in your hospital that the great man broke bread with us.

Art.—I think Luka Lukitch had better go in first as an instructor of youth.

Luka.—I can't, gentlemen, really I can't. I was brought up so that if an official one single degree higher in rank than

I am speaks to me, I simply collapse and my tongue is of no more use than if it was stuck in the mud. Let me off, gentlemen, you really must let me off.

Art.—Yes, Ammos, no doubt you are the only man to do it. You can talk like a Cicero.

Ammos.—What do you mean? A Cicero? What an idea to get into your head! I admit that I am carried away sometimes talking of a leash of my own dogs or a bloodhound——

All.—No, no! You can talk about the Tower of Babel or anything as well as dogs. Don't desert us, Ammos! be a father to us. Come, come, Ammos!

Ammos.—Well, pluck up heart, gentlemen.

(At this moment footsteps and coughing heard in Chles's rooms. All rush for the doors, crowding together and trying to get out with some collisions; smothered exclamations or heard outside.)

Bob's voice.—Oh, oh! Peter, look out! You have trod on my toes.

Zem's voice.—Make room there, make room! You press so! Do look out! You have squeezed me to death!

(Various exclamations, Oh, oh, ah, ah, are heard.)

Enter Chles.

Chles.—Well, I think I have had a real good snooze. Where do they get such mattresses and featherbeds? They have regularly sweated me! I really believe they must have drugged me at breakfast yesterday! My head is spinning still! I think I can pass my time first-rate here. I like kindness, I declare I do, and I prefer to be entertained out of pure hospitality to anything else, and not from any interested motives. The prefect's daughter ain't half a bad girl. And as for the mother, I think one might—well, I don't know—all the same, it is not a bad life this!

Enter Ammos.

Ammos.—(Aside.) Heaven be gracious and bring me safely through it! My knees are simply giving way under me. (Aloud, drawing himself up and holding his sheathed sword

in his hand.) I have the honor to present myself, the judge of the District Court, Collegiate Assessor, Liapkin Tiapkin.

Chles.—Sit down, I beg. So you are the judge here, eh?

Ammos.—In 1806 I was elected by the nobility to the position for three years, and I have carried on the functions ever since.

Chles.—Made a good thing by it, eh?

Ammos.—I have been promoted to the fourth grade order of the Vladimir (thrusting his fist out sideways a little.) (Aside.) Good gracious! Merciful heavens! I don't know where I'm sitting! I feel as if I were sitting on hot coals.

Chles.—What is that in your hand?

Ammos.—(Losing his head altogether and dropping the paper money on the floor.) Nothing, nothing.

Chles.—It is something. I see you have let some money fall.

Ammos.—(Trembling all over.) Nothing, nothing at all! (Aside.) O Lord! Now I am about to receive sentence! Now the prisoners' van has come for me.

Chles.—(Picking it up.) Yes, it is money, certainly.

Ammos.—(Aside.) Now it is all up! I am a gone coon!

Chles.—Tell you what; suppose you lend me this?

Ammos.—Of course! of course! By all means! With the greatest pleasure. (Aside.) Now, then, pluck does it! The Holy Virgin pull me through!

Chles.—The fact is I spent all my money on the way. I will pay you back as soon as possible from home.

Ammos.—Don't mention it, I beg. Such an honor in any case. Certainly, as far as my humble powers go—zeal and energy in the service of government—I endeavor to deserve. (Rising and drawing himself up.) I won't detain you longer. You have no orders for me?

Chles.—What orders should I have?

Ammos.—I thought perhaps you might be pleased to give some instructions to the district judge.

Chles.—Why? You see, I have no need for him at present. No, thanks, nothing! Much obliged all the same!

Ammos.—(Aside.) Hurrah! The game is ours!

(Exit Ammos.)

Chles.—(Alone.) Not a bad fellow, the judge.

Enter the Postmaster.

Postmaster.—I have the honor to introduce myself, Postmaster court councillor, Shpekin.

Chles.—Delighted, I am sure! I like good company. Sit down. Always live here, eh?

Post.—Yes, exactly so!

Chles.—Well, I like this little town. Not many people here, of course, but what of that. It is not the metropolis, is it, eh?

Post.—Certainly not; you are perfectly right.

Chles.—It is only at Petersburg one gets good form. Not among a lot of country bumpkins. What do you think? Is it not so?

Post.—Exactly so! (Aside.) Why, he is not proud a bit. He asks about everything.

Chles.—One can lead a very pleasant life in a small town after all; can't one, eh?

Post.—Exactly so, sir.

Chles.—What you want is people to respect you and like you sincerely; is that not so?

Post.—That is perfectly true.

Chles.—I am very glad, I confess, that you agree with me. People call me odd, that is just my way. (Aside.) Shall I ask this postmaster for a loan? (Aloud.) A curious thing has happened to me. I spent all my money on the road. You could not lend me three hundred rubles, could you?

Post.—Of course, of course, with the greatest pleasure! Here it is. I am perfectly ready to serve you, heart and soul!

Chles.—Thanks; very much obliged! I don't like to have to deny myself anything on a journey—why should one, eh?

Post.—Exactly so, sir! I will not venture to trouble you with my presence any longer. You have your directions to give in the postal department?

Chles.—No, nothing! (Exit Postmaster.)

The postmaster doesn't seem half a bad fellow either—devilish obliging anyhow. I like people like him!

Enter Luka Lukitch.

Luka Lukitch.—I have the honor to introduce myself, the school director, titular councillor, Chlopoff.

Chles.—Delighted, I am sure. Sit down. Have a cigar?

Luka.—(Aside.) I didn't expect anything like this. Shall I take it or not?

Chles.—O, take it. These are fair cigars. Not, of course, equal to the Petersburg ones. There, my friend, I smoke cigars at twenty-five roubles a hundred, and you lick your fingers after them—they're first-rate. Here's a light. (Holding a candle. Luka tries to light up, but trembles.)

Chles.—Try the other end.

(Luka drops the cigar from fright; spits, and makes a gesture of despair.)

Luka.—(Aside.) The devil take it all! This cursed fright I am in has played the mischief with me.

Chles.—I see you're not a great hand at cigars. Now, it is my weakness, I confess; women are another great weakness of mine. Now, tell us, which do you like best—dark or fair?

(Luka completely at a loss what to say, is silent.)

Chles.—Now tell us, I say, which is it? Brunette or blonde?

Luka.—I don't venture to know.

Chles.—Now don't you get out of it. I must know your taste.

Luka.—I venture to report——(Aside.) I don't know what I am saying! My head is going round.

Chles.—Ha, ha! You don't want to confess. I suspect some little brunette has touched you up. Isn't it so, eh?

(Luka is silent.)

Chles.—Ha! ha! You blush! Look at him! Look at him! Why don't you tell me?

Luka.—I was afraid your Excel——(Aside.) This cursed tongue of mine has betrayed me.

Chles.—Afraid? Well, there's something in my eyes which inspires fear at all events. I know that no single woman can resist them. Isn't it so, eh?

Luka.—Exactly so!

Chles.—Curious thing happened to me. Spent all my money on the road. You couldn't lend me three hundred roubles, could you?

Luka.—(Aside.) Here's a pretty go if I haven't got it. Ah, here it is. (Makes a dash at his pocket, takes out the notes and gives them to Chles. trembling.)

Chles.—Thanks, much obliged!

Luka.—I will not venture to trouble you further with my presence.

Chles.—Good-bye!

(Exit Luka hurriedly, almost with a run.)

Luka.—(As he goes out.) Thank heaven that's over! Perhaps he won't look in at the schools now.

Enter Artemie.

Artemie Phillipovitch.—I have the honor to introduce myself, the manager of the hospital, Privy Councillor Zemlianka.

Chles.—How are you? Sit down, pray!

Art.—I had the honor of accompanying you and personally receiving you at your inspection of the institutions confided to my charge.

Chles.—Ah, yes, I remember, that was a first-class breakfast you gave us.

Art.—It is my delight to labor in the cause of my country.

Chles.—I admit if I have a weakness, it is good cookery. Tell me, you seem to have got rather taller since yesterday somehow, haven't you?

Art.—Very likely! I may premise that I spare nothing to perform my functions with zeal. But now (drawing his chair and talking in a low voice)—but now there's the postmaster here, he does absolutely nothing. Lets everything

slide; keeps back letters; you investigate matters for yourself; and there is the judge who was with you just now. He is always out coursing hares and keeps dogs in the court house, and his conduct generally—if I may say so before you, and it is my duty to do so in the interests of the country, though he is my relation and friend—his conduct generally is most reprehensible. There is the squire here named Dobchinsky, whom you were pleased to see, and no sooner does Dobchinsky go out anywhere, than the judge goes and sits with his wife, and I am ready to swear that——

Chles.—Dear me, tut, tut! I had no conception of all this.

Art.—Then there is the school director. I don't know how the government could have trusted such a post to him. He is worse than a Jacobin, and puts such pernicious ideas into the boys' heads, you can't think. Would you like me to note down all those little things on paper for you?

Chles.—Yes, that will be the best way. I should like that. It will be amusing reading for some dull half hour. What is your name? I keep forgetting it.

Art.—Zemlianka.

Chles.—O yes, of course! Zemlianka. Got any children?

Art.—I should think so. Five of them already grown up.

Chles.—You don't say so! Grown up, eh? And what—and what are they like?

Art.—You mean—you wish to ask what their names are?

Chles.—Yes, what are their names?

Art.—Nicholas, Ivan, Elizabeth, Maria, and Perepatua.

Chles.—First-rate names.

Art.—I will not venture to trouble you any longer or occupy your time, which is marked out for sacred duties.

Chles.—O, never mind, don't mention it. Capital joke all that you have told me. Some other time, perhaps. That's the kind of thing I like. Hallo, I say! By the way, I keep on forgetting what your Christian name is.

Art.—Artemie Phillipovitch.

Chles.—By the way, Artemie, would you do me a little service? Curious thing, but I spent all my money on the

journey. Have you got four hundred roubles you could lend me?

Art.—Certainly, certainly!

Chles.—That's lucky! Thanks! Really very much obliged! (Exit Artemie.)

Enter Rastakovsky.

Rastakovsky.—I have the honor to report myself, a resident in this town and land owner, retired Brevet-Major Rastakovsky.

Chles.—Pray be seated. I am delighted to see you. I am acquainted with your chief.

Ras.—Oh, so you were pleased to know Zadunaiskye.

Chles.—What Zadunaiskye?

Ras.—Count Rumyantseff Zadunaiskye, Peter Alexandrovitch, he was my late commander.

Chles.—Ah, yes, then you served some time ago?

Ras.—I was in the service at the time of the siege of Silistria in 1773. That was hot work. The Turks were as near us as this table is to me. I was a sergeant then; and there was a brevet-major in our regiment. Did you happen to know him, Grozdeff, Peter Vassilievitch?

Chles.—Grozdeff? What Grozdeff?

Ras.—Peter Vassilievitch who was afterwards transferred to the Dragoons by special command of the late Emperor.

Chles.—No, I didn't know him.

Ras.—I thought, perhaps, you would not know him, because it is already more than thirty years ago since he died. His grand-daughter lives near here, about twenty versts away, married to Ivan Vassilievitch Cuckoldi.

Chles.—To a Cuckold? You don't say so! I had no idea of that.

Ras.—Yes; to Cuckoldi Ivan Vassilievitch. As I was saying, the Turks were as near us as this table. It was winter, and there was snow on the ground, and as much confusion as there was in the year when the French came into Moscow. There was another brevet-major in our regiment, Phikte Knabe, a German, they called him Siegfried Ivanovitch, but the com-

mander-in-chief at that time, Potemkin, ordered his name to be changed. "You are not Siegfried," he said, "you shall be called Soup Ivanovitch," and always after that he was called Soup Ivanovitch. Well, then, Soup Ivanovitch and Brevet-Major Grozdeff, whom I mentioned to you just now, were sent out to forage, and myself, too, was ordered to go with them, and a quartermaster, too. Perhaps you knew him, Trepakin, Avtamon Paulovitch; he died too about twenty-five years ago, I think.

Chles.—Trepakin; no, I didn't know him. But I was going to ask you——

Ras.—(Not hearing.) Fine fellow, red hair, golden shoulder strap, first-class hand at dancing polkas. He would clap his hands and carry off a couple from the colonel himself; and as soon as the girls—ha, ha, ha! we had tents then, and as soon as you put your nose into his tent—ha, ha! there he sat, and next morning the orderly brought him out like a dragoon in a three-cornered hat—ha, ha, ha! and his sword-belt hanging—ha, ha, ha!

Chles.—Yes; very similar thing happened to a friend of mine, an official who makes his service pay remarkably well. He was sitting in his dressing-gown smoking his pipe when suddenly a friend of mine came in, a guardsman of the Horse Guards, and said. (Stopping short and looking hard at Ras.) I say, by the way, you couldn't lend me a little money, could you? I spent all mine on the road.

Ras.—(Putting his hand to his ear.) Who did you say asked for money? Did the official ask the guardsman, or did the guardsman ask the official?

Chles.—No, I am asking you for some. You see I may forget it afterwards, so I thought I had better do it now.

(Rastakovsky here draws out his pocket handkerchief, and then unfolds it, Chlestakoff watching him eagerly; when he has unfolded the whole, he gives it a flourish, and blows his nose, Chlestakoff sinks back in his chair disgusted.)

Ras.—Oh, it's you that wants money, do you? Curious thing that. I thought it was the guardsman in that little story that asked for it. That happens sometimes in conversa-

tion. So you want some, eh? Now, I was going to ask you to do myself a favor.

Chles.—Well, what is it?

Ras.—I ought to get an extra pension, so I want you to give a hint to the senators or someone of that kind.

Chles.—All right, certainly, by all means.

Ras.—I gave in a petition myself, but I am not at all sure that I gave it in to the right place.

Chles.—How long ago was it since you sent in your petition?

Ras.—Well, to tell the truth it was not so very long ago. It was in 1801, and it was about thirty years ago, and no resolution has been passed on it yet. I sent it by a man named Soşulkin, Ivan Petrovitch, you know, who was going to Petersburgh then, and he was not a very trustworthy man, and I think, perhaps, he didn't take it to the right place. Of course there can't be much longer delay, but still thirty years have passed and so I think it ought to be decided soon.

Chles.—O yes, of course, it will be soon decided now. However, I was going to ask you in my turn——

(Ras. goes out suddenly.)

Chles.—Well, well, all right! Good-bye!

Enter Dobchinsky and Bobchinsky.

Bobchinsky.—I have the honor to introduce myself, resident of this town, Peter Bobchinsky, son of Ivan Bobchinsky.

Dobchinsky.—I am Squire Peter Dobchinsky, son of Ivan Dobchinsky.

Chles.—Ah, I have seen you before. You are the fellow that tumbled down. How's your nose?

Dob.—Thanks, pray don't trouble yourself about it. It's healed over—quite healed over!

Chles.—Ah, it's a good thing it's healed over. I am very glad! Have you got (suddenly) any money about you?

Dob.—Eh, money? How do you mean?

Chles.—A thousand rubles—just as a loan!

Bob.—I declare I have not got as much; have you, Peter?

Dob.—I have not either. Fact is, I have put all my money into the savings bank.

Chles.—Oh, well, if you can't manage a thousand, lend me a hundred.

Bob.—(Feeling in his pockets.) Have you got a hundred roubles about you, Peter? I have only forty in paper money.

Dob.—Twenty-five is all I have got.

Bob.—Look again, Peter. You know there is a hole in your pocket on the right-hand side. Very likely some has fallen into that.

Dob.—No, I have looked there, there is none there.

Chles.—Never mind, it doesn't matter. Give me the sixty-five roubles—that will do! (Takes the money.)

Dob.—I venture to ask your assistance on a matter of great delicacy.

Chles.—What is it?

Dob.—Very delicate affair. My eldest son, you see, well, he was born before I got married.

Chles.—Oh, was he?

Dob.—Well, yes, you see, he was. Now, I want him to be legitimatized and to take my name Dobchinsky.

Chles.—All right, let him be called Dobchinsky, there is no difficulty in that.

Dob.—I would not have troubled you on the matter, but he is such a clever boy, wonderfully clever boy; he gives great promise; he can repeat poetry by heart; and if a pocket-knife happens to fall in his way, he can cut you out a little droschky as cleverly as a conjurer. Peter here knows all about it.

Bob.—O yes, he is a boy of great capacity.

Chles.—All right! All right! I will see about it! I may say, at least, I hope, we will manage that for you. Have you got anything to say to me?

Bob.—Well, yes, I have. Just the very smallest petition in the world.

Chles.—What is it?

Bob.—I would venture to ask you when you go to St. Petersburg, just tell all the bigwigs there, the senators and the admirals, like this, "Your Lordships, or your Excellency, in such and such a village there lives Peter Ivanovitch Bobchinsky." Just like that, you see, quite simply. "There lives Peter Ivanovitch Bobchinsky."

Chles.—All right, I will do that for you.

Bob.—And if you should happen to come across the Emperor, you might tell the Emperor too, just in the same way, "Lo! and behold! your Imperial Majesty, in such and such a town lives Peter Ivanovitch Bobchinsky."

Chles.—All right, certainly!

Dob and Bob.—(Together.) I hope you will excuse us for having trespassed on your valuable time.

Chles.—Certainly, certainly, delighted!

(Exeunt Dob. and Bob.)

Chles.—There seem to be a good many officials here. It appears to me they take me for some one connected with the government. Well, it is true I threw dust in their eyes yesterday. What tomfoolery it all is! I will write an account of this to Tryapitchkin—he will write an article about it. He'll hit them off splendidly. Here, Ossip! Give me paper and ink! By Jove! Tryapitchkin is a man you have got to look sharp with if you come in his way. He would not spare his own father if he could make a point out of him, and he is fond of money, too. However, these officials are good fellows enough. It is an admirable trait in their character lending me money like this! Let's see exactly how much I've got. Three hundred, that is from the judge; three hundred from the postmaster, that is six, seven, eight—what greasy paper—eight, nine hundred! By Jove! over a thousand! I wish I could meet that captain again; I'd show him a trick or two.

Enter Ossip.

Well now, you fool, you see how they've received me and treated me? (Beginning to write.)

Ossip.—Yes, thank heaven! But I will tell you what, Ivan Alexandrovitch——

Chles.—Well, what?

Oss.—Get away from here. It is quite time we went, I swear.

Chles.—What humbug! Why?

Oss.—Why? The Lord be with them all. We have amused ourselves here for two days already, and that is enough. We must not stay with these people too long, damn them; it is risky! Times change and things may take a different turn. For God's sake, Ivan Alexandrovitch, let's be off. There are capital horses here and we will gallop away like anything.

Chles.—No; I like staying here—we will go to-morrow perhaps!

Oss.—Why put it off till to-morrow? For God's sake let us go, Ivan Alexandrovitch! For heaven's sake let us clear out! Although they give us great honor, don't you see they take you for someone else! And your father will be annoyed if you stay here. We could gallop away in first-rate style; they will give you the best horses.

Chles.—All right then, if you like! But take this letter over to the post first, and get the travelling pass at the same time. Just see that the horses are good, and tell the drivers that I will give them a whole rouble each to gallop like a special courier and to sing at the same time. I can imagine Tryapitchkin will die of laughing.

Oss.—All right, sir; I will send one of the people over with this, and I will go at once so as to lose no time.

Chles.—All right. Bring me a candle, that's all.

(Exit Ossip and speaks behind the scenes.)

Oss.—(Outside.) Here, I say, you fellow, take this letter to the post and tell the postmaster it's franked, and tell him my master wants the best postchaise with three horses that he has got, Imperial couriers, and it is not to be paid for, it's to go down to the expense of government—and look sharp, or else my master will be angry. Hold on! The letter isn't ready.

Chles.—I wonder where he lives now! Whether in Post Office street or Peascod street; he's always shifting his quar-

ters and leaving his bill unpaid. However, I'll send it on the chance to Post Office street.

(Ossip brings a candle and Chles. seals the letter. In the meanwhile Derjimorda's voice is heard outside.)

Derj.—(Outside.) Where are you coming to, old long beard? Don't you hear there's no admittance for anyone.

Chles.—(Handing the letter to Ossip.) Here, take it now!

Shopkeepers' voices outside.—Let us in, old fellow! You can't keep us out; we've come on business.

Derj.'s voice.—Off with you! He can't see you; he's asleep!

Chles.—What's that, Ossip? Just see what that row's about?

Oss.—There are some shopkeepers want to see you, and the orderly won't let them in. They are waving some papers, and they probably want to see you.

Chles.—(Goes to the window.) What do you want, my good people?

Shop. voice.—We have come to implore your mercy, my lord. Tell them to take our petition in.

Chles.—Let them in! Let them come in, Ossip! Tell them to let them in. (Takes the petition to the window and reads it.) "To His Most Excellent Worship, Mr. Finance, from the Shopkeepers Abdulin." What the devil does that mean? There is no such rank as Mr. Finance!

Enter several Shopkeepers.

Well, my good people!

Shopkeepers.—We have come humbly to implore your mercy.

Chles.—Well, what do you want?

Shop.—Save us, my Lord. We are suffering frightful oppression unjustly.

Chles.—Who from?

Shop.—From the Prefect here, my lord; there never has been such a Prefect. The way he tyrannizes over us is be-

yond description. He has reduced us to starvation with his billeting. We might as well be hanged at once. It is not for anything we have done wrong. He seizes one fellow by the beard, "Ah, you Tartar," he says. It is not as if we didn't treat him with respect. We always do our duty. Of course, we have to give dresses to his wife and daughter; we don't complain of that—but nothing satisfies him—indeed it doesn't. He comes into the shop and takes everything he sets eyes on. He sees a piece of cloth, "Hallo, my friend," says he, "that's nice cloth; just bring it up to me." Then you have to bring it, and there will be perhaps nearly fifty yards in the piece.

Chles.—Is it possible? What a scoundrel, eh?

Shop.—I swear to you nobody can remember a Prefect like him. You have to hide everything in the shop when he comes in sight. He is so indiscriminating, he will take any rubbish; even currants that have been lying in a barrel the whole summer, things that my shop boy would not touch; he will thrust his fist in and take a whole handful of them. His name-day is, of course, St. Anthony's Day, and one would think we gave him every mortal thing he could want then. But no; he asks for more, and then he says his name-day is on St. Onuphria's Day too. What is one to do! We must carry him everything on St. Onuphria's Day as well.

Chles.—By Jove! He's a regular robber, isn't he?

Shop.—That he is. If you only venture to say a word against it he'll bring a whole regiment and billet them on you, and then if you resist he orders the doors to be shut. "I'm not going to inflict corporal punishment," says he, "or torture you; that," says he, "is forbidden by law; but I will just see how many salt herrings you can eat, my fine fellow."

Chles.—What a blackguard, eh? Why, he ought to go to Siberia for this!

Shop.—Oh, never mind where he goes, your Excellency; send him anywhere, anywhere will do as long as it is far enough from us! But don't despise our bread and salt, your honor, we have brought you some sugar loaves and a hamper of wine as a gift of welcome.

Chles.—No, no, you mustn't think that. I never take bribes of any sort. But if now you were to offer me say three

hundred rubles as a loan, why that would be a different matter altogether; I could take that.

Shop.—Certainly, by all means, my lord! What's the use of three hundred, take five hundred; only help us!

Chles.—Very well, I have no objection at all. I will take five hundred.

Shop.—(Bringing the money on a silver salver.) And please accept the salver along with it.

Chles.—Well, I don't mind accepting the salver.

Shop.—And take the sugar too, just for once.

Chles.—O no, a bribe's a thing that I never——

Oss.—Your Excellency, why not take it? Do take it now. It'll all come in useful on the road. Here, give us the sugar-loaf and the sack. Hand over the whole lot, it will all come in useful on the road. What's that? A piece of rope. O, give us the rope as well. A piece of rope will come in handy on the way too. A carriage may break or something, and it will do to tie it up with.

Shop.—Do us the great favor. If you can't help us in what we ask, then there is nothing left but despair. We might as well put our heads into the noose at once.

Chles.—Well, I will do my best for you.

(Exeunt shopkeepers.)

Women's voices heard.

Voices.—I defy you to keep me out. I will complain to him myself about you! Don't shove so hard!

Chles.—(Going to the window.) Who is there? What do you want, my good woman?

Two Women's Voices.—We have come to implore your mercy, my lord; do listen to us, for mercy's sake!

Chles.—Let her in!

Enter a couple of women, Locksmith's Wife and the Non-Commissioned Officer's Wife. They throw themselves at Chlestakoff's feet and kiss them.

Locksmith's Wife.—Mercy, mercy, my lord!

Non-Commissioned Officer's Wife.—Mercy, mercy, my lord!

Chles.—Who on earth are you?

Non-Com.'s W.—I am the wife of the non-commissioned officer.

Lock.'s W.—I am the locksmith's wife, the artisan of this town, Febrona Petrova, my father——

Chles.—Hold on; speak one at a time. What do you want?

Lock.'s W.—Justice—justice against that Prefect! God send every possible evil on his children! May nothing prosper with him, the scoundrel! or with his uncles or with his aunts!

Chles.—Well, but what is it?

Lock.'s W.—He has had my husband's head shaved and sent him as a recruit to the army, though the lot didn't fall to us, the scoundrel! and it's against the law, too. He is a married man.

Chles.—How did he dare to do that?

Lock.'s W.—He did it, the blackguard! he did it! God punish him for it in this world and the next. May his aunt, if he has an aunt, come to utter grief; and his father, if he is still alive, may the beast die like a dog, or choke himself everlastingly, the damned scoundrel! He ought to have taken the tailor's son. He was a drunken lout anyhow, but his parents gave him a big present, so then he wanted to take the son of the shopkeeper, Mrs. Panteleevi. Mrs. Panteleevi likewise sent three bits of cloth to his wife, so then he came to me. "What do you want with a husband?" said he; "he's no good to you any more." I think I ought to know if he is any good or not; that is my affair, the blackguard! "He is a thief," says he; "if he has not stolen anything yet, it is all the same; he'll steal something before long; and even if he doesn't, he'll be taken to serve next year in any case." And what am I to do without my husband? the blackguard! May none of his relations ever see the light of heaven! and if he has got a stepmother by any chance, may his stepmother——

Chles.—Come, come; and you? (Turning to the old woman.)

Lock.'s W.—(Going out.) Don't forget, my darling. Be gracious!

Non-Com.'s W.—I have come to complain of the Prefect!

Chles.—Well, what is it all about? Tell me in a few words.

Non-Com.'s W.—He has had me flogged, your honor.

Chles.—What!

Non-Com.'s W.—It was all a mistake, my deary; the woman had a row in the market, and the police didn't come up in time to catch them, so they took me and reported me. I could not sit down for two days afterward.

Chles.—Well, but what can be done now?

Non-Com.'s W.—Why, there is nothing to be done, of course. I can't help my luck. Make him pay a fine for the mistake. The money would come in uncommonly useful just now.

Chles.—Very well, very well; now be off! I'll—I'll see about it. (Hands are thrust in at the windows with petitions.) Who is there besides? (Goes to the window.) I won't take them! I won't take them! It is no use! It is no use! Go away from the window! I am sick of them! The devil take it, don't let any more in, Ossip!

Oss.—(Calls out the window.) Be off, be off! It is not the time! Come to-morrow!

(The door opens as a queer figure in a frieze cloak appears, with swollen lips and cheek bunged up; behind him several others.)

Go away! Go away! Where are you coming to? (Pushing them out. Ossip shoves his fist into the stomach of the first, and slams the door after him.) (Exit Ossip.)

Enter Maria.

Maria.—Oh!

Chles.—What were you in such a fright about, mademoiselle?

Maria.—Oh, I was not in a fright at all!

Chles.—Oh, but allow me, mademoiselle; I am so pleased! Do you think I am the sort of a man to—— But might I ask you where you were thinking of going to?

Maria.—I was not going anywhere.

Chles.—And how is it you were not going anywhere?

Maria.—I thought perhaps mamma was here; and—and——

Chles.—No, no; but I want to know why were you not going anywhere?

Maria.—I am afraid I interrupt you. You were engaged in important business.

Chles.—Your pretty eyes are better than all the important business in the world. You could not interrupt me—you really could not. On the contrary, you could only bring pleasure to me.

Maria.—Oh, that is the polite way they talk in St. Petersburg.

Chles.—I dare say they would to a lovely creature like you. Might I have the inexpressible happiness of handing you to a chair? But it is a throne you are fit for, not a chair.

Maria.—Oh, really, I don't know—I wanted so much to go. (Sits down.)

Chles.—What a pretty scarf that is you have got on!

Maria.—Oh, you are laughing at me! Anything to make fun of a poor little country girl.

Chles.—Oh, how I wish I was your scarf, so that I might be wound round your lily-white neck!

Maria.—I don't know what you mean at all. What are you talking about? What scarf? What curious weather it is to-day!

Chles.—Your sweet lips, mademoiselle, are nicer than any weather.

Maria.—Oh, how you talk! I rather wanted to ask you just to write a few verses in my album, just as a keepsake. You know so much poetry.

Chles.—Of course I will, mademoiselle; anything to please you. You have only to say what kind of poetry you like.

Maria.—Oh, the same as—you know, something nice and original.

Chles.—But what are verses, after all? I know any amount of them.

Maria.—But tell me, do, what will you write for me?

Chles.—Well, what is the use of telling you? I know them without that.

Maria.—I do love them so!

Chles.—I know lots of every sort. Here is something for you: "Oh, thou man, who vainly criest against God in thy grief!" and so on. Well, there are others like that—I can't remember them at this moment. However, that doesn't matter a bit. Rather let me declare my love for you, which has been kindled by your lovely eyes. (Moving his chair near her.)

Maria.—Love! I don't understand what you mean by love. I never heard of it! What is it? (Moves her chair away.)

Chles.—Why do you move your chair away? Let us sit close to each other; it is much nicer.

Maria.—(Moving away.) Why should we sit so close? Farther off will do just as well.

Chles.—(Moving nearer to her.) Why should we sit so far off? Closer will do just as well.

Maria.—(Moving away.) Why do you go on like this?

Chles.—(Moving nearer.) It's only your fancy. We're not really sitting close to each other. Just imagine we are sitting a long way apart.

Maria.—(Suddenly, looking toward the window.) There was something seemed to fly by just now. Was it a magpie, do you think, or some other bird?

Chles.—Oh, yes; it was a magpie. (He kisses her on the shoulder, looking all the time at the window.)

Maria.—(Rising angrily.) No, no, that's too much! How can you be so rude?

Chles.—(Seizing her hand.) Forgive me, mademoiselle; it was love for you that made me do it. Love! Love!

Maria.—You take me for a mere country girl. (Tries to escape.)

Chles.—It was love, indeed, it was love! I was only joking, Maria Antonovna. Don't be angry with me. I will go down on my knees, if you like, and beg your pardon. (Falls on his knees.) Forgive me! There, you see I am on my knees. Oh, forgive me!

Enter Anna.

Anna.—Lor'! here's a pretty scene!

Chles.—(Rising.) Oh, the devil!

Anna.—And pray, what does this mean? This is pretty sort of behavior, this!

Maria.—Mamma, dear, I——

Anna.—Go away at once; do you hear? Go away! Leave the room, and don't show yourself again!

(Maria goes out crying.)

Anna.—Excuse me; I confess I was rather astonished.

Chles.—(Aside.) She's not half bad-looking, either! (He throws himself on his knees before her.) Madam, you see I am desperately in love.

Anna.—Don't go down on your knees! Oh, stand up; do! The floor is so dirty here!

Chles.—No, I won't get up; I won't get up! On my knees alone I hear my fate, whether I am doomed to die or live.

Anna.—But excuse me; I don't as yet quite understand what you mean. Unless my eyes deceive me, you are making a proposal to my daughter.

Chles.—No, no; it is you that I am in love with. My existence hangs on a single hair. If you don't crown my constant love with happiness, I am unworthy to exist on this mortal earth any longer. My heart is on fire. Give us your hand.

Anna.—But really—I must say—you must remember—to some extent—in a way—I am married already, you see.

Chles.—That doesn't matter a rap! Love makes no distinctions. As the poet says, "The laws may condemn, but"—let us flee and seek the spot where the shadows of the streams —Give us your hand; do, now.

Enter Maria.

Maria.—Mamma, papa said that you—— (Sees Chlestakoff on his knees.) Lor'! here's a pretty scene!

Anna.—What do you mean, you flighty girl, to come darting into the room like a burnt cat? Well, and what did you find to astonish you so? What do you suppose, eh? Really, you go on like a child of three years old. You are not the very least bit like a grown-up girl of eighteen. I really don't know

when you will learn a little sense and begin to behave like a young lady who has been properly brought up, and when you will know what you ought to do and ought not to do, and quiet down a little.

Maria.—(Through her tears.) Really, mamma, I didn't know——

Anna.—You are perfectly wild; you are getting wind in your head. I think you are getting just like Liapkin Tiapkin's daughters. That's not the kind of people you should take as an example; no, indeed! Try to imitate me—your mother! That's the sort of model you should set before you!

Chles.—(After walking up and down the room undecided for a short time, finally resolves, and goes up to the daughter and takes her by the hand.) Anna Andreevna, don't oppose our happiness; confirm with your blessing our constant love.

Anna.—Why, then, it is she that you——

Chles.—Is it to be life or death?

Anna.—There, you see, you stupid girl; do you understand now; it is for a little silly fool like you that our guest has condescended to go down on his knees? You instantly run away like one possessed; you really deserve I should refuse my consent on purpose. You don't deserve such luck!

Maria.—I won't do it again, mamma, really!

Enter the Prefect, perfectly distraught.

Prefect.—I won't do it again, your excellency; don't ruin me altogether.

Chles.—Why, what is the matter with you?

Pre.—Those shopkeepers have been complaining to your excellency. I declare to you on my word of honor that not half they say is true. They all rob and swindle the people themselves. That non-commissioned officer's wife told you a parcel of lies about my having flogged her. It is a lie, I swear it is a lie; she—flogged herself.

Chles.—Oh, bother the non-commissioned officer's wife; I don't care about her.

Pre.—Don't believe them! They are such liars that a child this high couldn't believe them. The whole town knows what

liars they are; and as for swindlers, I venture to say they are the biggest swindlers the world ever saw.

Anna.—Do you know the honor that Ivan Alexandrovitch proposes to do us? He asks our daughter's hand in marriage.

Pre.—Where? Where? You must be stark, staring mad, my dear. Don't be angry, your excellency; she is a little touched in the head. Her mother was like that before her.

Chles.—It is true I have proposed to her. I am in love.

Pre.—I can't believe it, your excellency.

Anna.—You can't believe a thing when you are told it.

Chles.—I am not joking, I assure you. I am ready to go mad with love.

Pre.—I daren't believe it. I am not worthy of such an honor.

Chles.—It is a fact. And if you don't agree to let me have Maria Antonovna, the devil knows, I am ready for anything.

Pre.—I can't believe it, your excellency—you are pleased to jest.

Anna.—Oh, what a dolt you are! As a matter of fact, the whole thing has been explained to you.

Pre.—I can't believe it.

Chles.—Give me your consent. Give us your consent. I am a desperate man, and ready for anything; and when I shoot myself, you will be tried for murder!

Pre.—(Losing his head.) Oh, good heavens! Really, I have done nothing wrong, neither in thought nor deed. Don't be angry with me. Do exactly as you please. I really don't know myself what I am doing. I made such a fool of myself—such a fool as never was!

Anna.—Now, then, give them your blessing.

Pre.—May God bless you! Really I am not guilty! The devil! What is he up to? Why, he is kissing her, absolutely kissing her, as if they really were engaged! By Jove, what a happy idea! Here's a piece of luck.

Enter Ossip.

Ossip.—The horses are ready, sir.

Chles.—All right! I will come directly.

Pre.—Are you pleased to be going away?

Chles.—Yes, I must be off.

Pre.—But when will you—that is to say—you were pleased to hint at something like a marriage.

Chles.—It will be directly. I must just go for one day to my uncle, a rich old man; I shall be back to-morrow.

Pre.—We can't venture to detain you. I trust we shall have a delightful meeting again soon.

Chles.—Of course, of course; I will be back directly. Good-bye, my love! I really cannot express what I feel. Good-bye, my darling! (Kisses Maria's hand.)

Pre.—Don't you want anything for the journey? You were good enough to say, I think, that you were in want of money.

Chles.—Oh, no, thanks; why should you think so? Well, perhaps I may as well take a little.

Pre.—How much do you want, do you think?

Chles.—Well, you lent me two hundred—that is to say, four hundred, not two hundred; I don't wish to take advantage of your mistake—so suppose you make it a round sum and make it eight hundred altogether.

Pre.—I will give it to you in a minute. (Takes it out of his pocketbook.) Here it is, all in new banknotes, as if on purpose.

Chles.—Oh, thanks! This is capital! New money brings new happiness, they say; eh?

Pre.—Exactly so.

Chles.—Good-bye, Anton Antonovitch. Much obliged for your hospitality. I have not had such a good reception anywhere as I have had here. Good-bye, Anna Andreevna; good-bye, Maria, my darling. (Exeunt omnes.)

(Outside the scene, voices.)

Chles.'s Voice.—Good-bye, my angel, Maria Antonovna!

Pre.'s Voice.—Hallo! Going in a post-chaise that you will have to change at every stage?

Chles.'s Voice.—Oh, yes; I am accustomed to it. Springs make my head ache.

Driver's voice.—Whoa there—whoa!

Pre.'s voice.—Then have something to sit on at all events, if only a rug. Shall I tell them to bring you a rug?

Chles.'s voice.—O no, thanks, that's a mere trifle. Well, perhaps I might as well have a rug.

Pre.'s voice.—Hallo, Avdotia, run to the cupboard and fetch the best rug, the Persian one, with blue border. Look sharp!

Driver's voice.—Whoa, I say, whoa!

Pre.'s voice.—When may we venture to expect you then?

Chles.'s voice.—To-morrow or the day after.

Ossip's voice.—Ah, this is the rug, is it? Here, spread it out like that, and now some straw on this side.

Driver's voice.—Whoa!

Ossip's voice.—There, on this side, here, a litle more! That'll do, that'll do famously. Now then, sit down, your worship!

Chles.'s voice.—Good-bye, Anton Antonovitch.

Pre.'s voice.—Good-bye, your Excellency.

Ladies.—Good-bye, Ivan Alexandrovitch!

Chles.'s voice.—Good-bye, mamma.

Driver's voice.—Now, then, off you go, my flyers!

ACT V.

Scene the same.

The Prefect, Anna Andreevna and Maria.

Prefect.—Well, Anna Andreevna, have you thought all this over at all? Here's a conquest we have made, eh? By Jove, you never dreamt of this, did you, now? Simple Prefect's wife one day, and the next, ugh! What devil's luck you must have been born with, old woman!

Anna.—Not at all! I knew it a long time ago! You are astounded because you're a common sort of man, and you've never seen people who are comme il faut.

Pre.—Oh, all very well, my dear, I am a man comme il faut myself. All the same, when you think of it Anna, what fine

birds we'll become, you and I, eh? We'll be real top-sawyers now! The deuce, I should think we would! Well, wait a bit now! Just you see if I don't make those fellows who are so fond of making petitions and complaints jump. I'll give them pepper. Hallo, who's there? Here, Ivan Karpovitch, just call those shopkeepers here, I'll drop on them, the rascals; complain against me, indeed! the cursed Jews! Just you wait a bit, my good fellows; I chastised them with whips before, but now I'll give 'em scorpions. Write them all down, everyone who went howling against me, especially the writer, the fellow who got the petitions up for them. Let every man-jack know the honor that has been bestowed on their Prefect, that his daughter is going to marry none of your ordinary men, begad! but a fellow who has not got his equal in the world, who can do anything, anything, any mortal thing; tell every man about that! Shout it out in the streets, ring the bells; damn it all, when we have a festival we will have a real good one. Ah, Anna Andreevna, ah! what shall we do now? Where shall we live, here or St. Petersburg?

Anna.—Petersburg, of course. How could we possibly stay here?

Pre.—Well, if it must be, it shall be Petersburg. At the same time it would not be half bad here. However, we can send the Prefectship to the devil now, I suppose, eh, Anna Andreevna!

Anna.—Of course! What's a Prefectship now?

Pre.—Bless you, I shall become a real swell official, eh, Anna Andreevna? You know he is on intimate terms with all the Ministers and goes to Court. I shall get all the promotion he will be able to get me. I should not be surprised if I became a general in time, eh, Anna Andreevna? What do you think about it? Do you think they might make me a general?

Anna.—I should think so. It is perfectly possible.

Pre.—Oh, the devil take it! It will be a fine thing to be a general and have a ribbon over your shoulder. What shall it be, Anna, red or blue, the Saint Anne or the White Eagle?

Anna.—Why, the blue is the best, of course.

Pre.—Oh, that's what you want, is it? Well, the red is not bad either. Now, I will tell you why I want so much to

be a general, because if it happens you are travelling anywhere you see aides-de-camp and adjutants scamper in front of you and order fresh horses wherever you go, and then at the posting stations no one else has a chance of getting them. They all wait for you, all these captains and petty officers, Prefects and people of that sort, and you don't take the slightest notice of them. You go and dine with the Governor, and there, "get out of the way," the Prefect has to stand before you, ha, ha, ha! By Jove, that's the part of it all I like.

Anna.—Oh, yes, you like all those coarse kinds of things, but you must remember that your life will be quite different. That your friends won't be some doggy judge or other, whom you go out with after hares, or a man like Zemlianka, not a bit! You will have to know polished, cultivated men, noble men, men of society, but I declare I feel afraid for you, you will let some word or other slip out which is never heard in polite society.

Pre.—What does it matter? A word or two won't hurt.

Anna.—That's all very well, when you were a simple Prefect, but now your life is quite different.

Pre.—Yes, by Jove; do you know, I am told that there are two sorts of fish at Petersburg, the smelt and the whitebait; that they simply make your mouth water when you begin to eat them.

Anna.—He can think of nothing but fish! My views are quite different; I want nothing else than that our house should be the first in St. Petersburg, and that there should be such a smell of perfume in the rooms that you can hardly go into them, and when you do you feel inclined to close your eyes and sniff up the delicious fragrance.

Enter the Shopkeepers.

Pre.—Hallo, my boys, how are you?

Shop.—I trust we see your honor in good health.

Pre.—How are you, my dear fellows, how are you getting on in business, eh? Ugh! You tinkers you, counter-jumpers, you'll come complain against me, will you? You scoundrels, you! You brute beasts, you sharks, complain, will you? What!

I took too much, did I? Now, thinks you, we'll take him and put him in prison. God damn your——

Anna.—Anton Antonovitch! what language you are using!

Pre.—Oh, language indeed! I'm not going to bother about my language now. Do you know that same official you complained to is going to marry my daughter? How do you like that, eh? What do you say now? You swindle the townspeople! I've got you now. If you make a contract with Government you swindle it out of a 100,000 roubles, furnishing rotten cloth, then you go and make me a present of twenty-five yards, and expect a reward for it into the bargain. If you only knew you'd—he puts his stomach out forsooth—he is a merchant! He must not be touched! "We don't give way," they say, "to the gentry," you are pretty fellows! Why, a gentleman learns some science if he is whipped at school! It's for his own good, that he may be something useful; but you, you begin as rogues and your master beats you for not knowing how to cheat. As a boy, when you don't know the Lord's Prayer yet, you go in for false measures, and you put on a big stomach and your pockets swell out. Oh, then we put on airs, begad! Wonderful creatures we are; because you turn out sixteen urns a day, you must put on a devil of a lot of side! Damn your side, and damn the lot of you!

Shop.—We confess, Anton Antonovitch!

Pre.—Complain, will you? I should like to know who helped you in that swindle about the bridge, when you charged for twenty thousand rubles' worth of wood, and you didn't supply a hundred rubles' worth. I helped you, you goat-bearded brute you! You forget that, eh? If I chose to split on you I could get you sent to Siberia. Ah, what do you say to that?

Shop.—We were wrong to complain, Anton Antonovitch; the devil tempted us. It is the last time we will ever do it. We will make up to you in any way you like, only don't be angry with us.

Pre.—Don't be angry with you, yes, you can grovel at my feet now, and why? Because I have got the whip-hand of you! If you had got the least bit the better of me, you would have trodden me down into the very mud and then thrown logs on the top of me too.

Shop.—Don't ruin us, Anton Antonovitch!

Pre.—Don't ruin us, you say now, ah, what was it before, eh? (Shaking his fist at them.) I'd like—well, that's enough, I'll let you off this time. I don't bear malice. Still just you look out, and keep your ears open. It is not just an ordinary gentleman that my daughter is going to marry, and there will be a few congratulatory presents, do you understand, and none of your ordinary little things, backs of sturgeons and loaves of sugar and things like that. Well, be off with you, for God's sake! (Merchants go out.)

Enter Ammos, Artemie and Ras.

Ammos.—Can the report be true, Anton Antonovitch? What an extraordinary piece of good luck that has come to you!

Art.—I have the honor to offer my congratulations on the extraordinary piece of good fortune that has befallen you! I rejoiced from the bottom of my soul to hear it, Anna Andreevna, Maria Antonovna. (Kisses their hands.)

Ras.—I congratulate you, Anton Antonovitch. May God give you long life and to your new relative too. May He bless you with a numerous progeny, grandsons and great-grandsons, Anna Andreevna, and Maria Antonovna. (Kisses their hands.)

Enter Karobkin with his wife and Lulukoff.

Karobkin.—I have the honor to congratulate you, Anton Antonovitch, Anna Andreevna and Maria Antonovna.

Karobkin's Wife.—I heartily congratulate you, Anna Andreevna, on this new happiness.

Lulu.—I have the honor to congratulate you, Anna Andreevna, Maria Antonovna. Let me congratulate you. (Kisses each of their hands and after each performance turns to the audience and puts his tongue in his cheek.)

Enter a crowd of people dressed in frock-coats.

People.—Anna Andreevna and Maria Antonovna! (Go up to each of the ladies and kiss their hands.)

Bobchinsky and Dobchinsky come in during this performance.

Bobchinsky.—I have the honor to congratulate you.

Dobchinsky.—Anton Antonovitch, I have the honor to congratulate you.

Bob.—This most auspicious event.

Dob.—Anna Andreevna, Maria Antonovna.

Bob.—Anna Andreevna, Maria Antonovna.

(Both go to kiss her hand together, and their heads come into collision.)

Dob.—Let me congratulate you. How happy you will be. You will wear cloth of gold and have all sorts of delicate things to eat and pass your time in pleasure.

Bob.—Maria Antonovna, let me congratulate you. May heaven send you every kind of wealth, lots of gold, little baby soon, a little chap you can put on the palm of your hand and he will squeak, squeak, squeak!

Luka Lukitch and his wife come in.

Luka.—I have the honor——

Luka's Wife.—(Running in front of him.) I congratulate you, Anna Andreevna; I really was so delighted. I was just told Anna Andreevna's daughter is engaged to be married. Good heavens, I thought, and so delighted I was that I said to my husband, "My dear Luka," I said, "here's a happy thing for Anna Andreevna." Thank heaven for it! I thought to myself, and I said to him, I am so overjoyed that I am dying with impatience to go off and tell Anna Andreevna herself—ah, good Lord, I thought to myself, Anna Andreevna has always wanted to make a good match for her daughter, and now see how fate has made one for her. Just exactly what she wanted! And I was so overcome with delight that I could hardly speak! I literally cried with joy—I actually sobbed, so that my husband said to me, "My dear, what are you sobbing about?" "My dear Luka," I said, "I really don't know." My tears were flowing in streams.

Pre.—Sit down, gentlemen and ladies, I beg of you, sit down. Meeshka, bring some more chairs here.

Enter Orderlies and Police Sergeant.

Sergeant.—I have the honor to congratulate you and to wish you many years' happiness.

Pre.—Thanks, thanks; sit down, gentlemen.

Ammos.—Tell us, Anton Antonovitch, how did it all begin? How did it all happen?

Pre.—The way it took place was most extraordinary. He was good enough to make the proposal himself, personally.

Anna.—He did it with a most perfect refinement and gentlemanly feeling. He put it most charmingly. "Anna Andreevna," he said, "it is simply from the respect that I feel for your high qualities," and a handsome, well-educated young fellow full of the highest principles—"believe me," he said, "my life is not worth a straw. It is simply the veneration I feel for your rare virtues."

Maria.—Oh, mamma! Why, he said that to me!

Anna.—Be quiet! You don't know anything! Don't go interfering with what doesn't concern you. "Anna Andreevna," he said, "I am really astounded;" he uttered a flow of flattering words like these, and I was just going to say, "Really, we can't venture to hope for such an honor," when he suddenly fell on his knees and in such a fascinating way he said, "Anna Andreevna, don't make me the most miserable of men; assent to my wishes or I lay myself a corpse at your feet."

Maria.—Really, mamma, but he said all that about me!

Anna.—Well, yes, of course! There was something about you, too. I never said there was not.

Pre.—I was quite alarmed. He said he would shoot himself. "I will shoot myself," he cried out, "I really will."

All the Ladies Present.—(Together.) Lor! Fancy that!

Ammos.—What a go!

Luka.—To tell the plain truth, the hand of fate was in it!

Art.—It is not fate, my dear fellow; that's all humbug! It is the Prefect's eminent services that have brought it about. (Aside.) A swine like that always gets such a piece of luck!

Ammos.—If you like, Anton Antonovitch, I will sell you the dog we were bargaining for this morning.

Pre.—No, I have no time to care about dogs just now.

Ammos.—Well, if you don't want that one, perhaps we can agree about another.

Karo.'s Wife.—Ah, Anna Andreevna, you can't imagine how delighted I am at your happiness!

Karo.—Allow me to ask where is your noble guest now? I heard that he had gone away, for some reason or other.

Pre.—Yes, he has just gone away on some very important business.

Anna.—He has gone to see his uncle, to ask his blessing.

Pre.—Yes, to ask his blessing. To-morrow—— (He sneezes and they congratulate him in chorus.) Many thanks! He will be back to-morrow. (Sneezes again; murmurs of congratulation again.)

Serg.—Bless you, your excellency.

Bob.—My wish for you is a hundred years of life and a mountain of gold pieces.

Dob.—I wish you forty times forty years of life.

Art.—(Aside.) May you come to utter grief!

Karo.'s Wife.—(Aside.) May the devil take you!

Pre.—(Not hearing what they say.) Many thanks, I am sure. I wish you the same.

Anna.—We mean, now, to live in St. Petersburg. The atmosphere here is a little too provincial. You know this is not at all the sort of thing we like. My husband, too, he will get his promotion to the rank of general in St. Petersburg.

Pre.—I must say, gentlemen, that—the deuce take it, I have set my heart on being a general.

Luka.—I hope to heaven you will get it.

Ras.—With man it is impossible, with God all things are possible.

Ammos.—Big ships make long voyages.

Art.—Honors keep pace with merit!

Ammos.—(Aside.) A nice thing, indeed, if he really does become a general, it'll suit him about as well as a saddle suits a cow. No, my lad, it is a long way to that yet. There are others with cleaner hands than yours who are not generals yet.

Art.—(Aside.) He is thinking, the devil take it, of being a general already. What of this? It would not be so very

surprising; perhaps he may become a general. He swaggers enough. The devil himself could not beat him at that. (Aloud.) Don't forget us, then, Anton Antonovitch!

Ammos.—And if anything unpleasant should happen, for instance, in the course of business, I hope we may count on your protection.

Karo.—Next year I shall be bringing my son to St. Petersburg to try to get him in the service for the benefit of the state. I trust you will do us the kindness to extend your protection to me and be like a father to the orphan boy.

Pre.—I am quite ready to do what I can—quite ready, I am sure.

Anna.—Oh, you are always ready to promise anything. In the first place, you won't have time to think about this, and why should you go burdening yourself with promises of that sort?

Pre.—Why not, my love? One can, now and then.

Anna.—Well, perhaps you can; but still you need not go protecting all the small fry like this.

Karo.'s Wife.—(Aside.) Do you hear what she calls us?

A Guest.—Oh, she has always been like that. I know her. Set her down to the table, and out she stretches her feet.

Enter the Postmaster.

Postmaster.—Gentlemen, a most extraordinary thing has happened. That official whom we all took for the Government Inspector was not an inspector at all!

All.—How? How do you mean? Not an inspector at all?

Post.—Not a bit of it! I found this out from a letter!

Pre.—What! What do you mean? What letter?

Post.—From a leter he wrote with his very own hand. They brought me a letter to the post, I looked at the address; I saw Post Office street; I was nearly dumbfounded. Hallo, thinks I, he has found out some irregularities in the Postal Department and has reported me to Government. I took the letter and broke open the seal.

Pre.—How dare you!

Post.—I really don't know how I made up my mind to do it; some supernatural impulse drove me on. I was just going to send it off by a special courier, but I felt such a tremendous curiosity to see what was inside; I never felt anything like it before in my life. I can't—I can't—I hear a ringing in my ears, then it draws me on, see how it draws me on. On one side I seem to hear a voice warning me, "Don't break the seal, you will come to awful grief;" on the other side, just like some demon kept whispering to me, "Break it, break it and see." When I pressed the seal I felt hot all over, and when I broke it open, by Jove, a cold chill ran down my back. My hand shook and I felt all abroad.

Pre.—How dare you open the letter of a powerful personage like that?

Post.—But that's the point! He is not powerful, and he's not a personage, neither!

Pre.—And what is he, pray, in your opinion?

Post.—He is neither one nor the other. The devil only knows what he is.

Pre.—(Angrily.) What do you mean, neither one nor the other? How dare you talk to me like that: neither one nor the other, and the devil only knows what he is? I will put you under arrest.

Post.—Who? You?

Pre.—Yes, I.

Post.—Oh, just you try it on.

Pre.—Do you know that he is going to marry my daughter? I shall be a great man myself, and I could pack you off to Siberia, if I like.

Post.—Oh, Anton Antonovitch, Siberia, indeed! It's a far cry to Siberia. I had better read you the letter, gentlemen, if you will allow me. Shall I read it?

All.—Yes, read it, read it!

Post.—(Reads.) "I hasten to tell you, my dear Tryapitchkin, about a most extraordinary adventure I have had. On the way I was completely cleaned out all round by a captain of a line regiment, so completely that the inn-keeper actually wanted to lodge me in jail, when all at once, thanks

to my Petersburg phiz and dress, the people of the town proceeded to take me for a governor-general at least, so here I am lodging in the Prefect's house, having a jolly time and making hot love to his wife and daughter, both of them. Do you remember once when we were awfully hard up and had to get our dinners by some dodge or another, and how the restaurant-keeper seized me by the collar because I wanted to pay for some pies I had by a check on the Bank of England? I tell you, it is rather different here now. Everybody lends me as much money as I choose to ask for. They are most eccentric fellows. You would die with laughing. I know you write articles. You really must bring them in. Dramatis Personæ: to begin with, the Prefect, born fool, stupid as an owl"——

Pre.—It is impossible; that is not there!

Post.—Well, read it yourself, then.

Pre.—(Reads.) "Born fool, stupid as an owl." It is impossible! You put this in yourself!

Post.—How on earth should I put it in?

Art.—Read it out!

Luka.—Go on!

Post.—(Reads.) "The Prefect, a born fool, stupid as an owl."

Pre.—Oh, the devil! As if you need repeat that over again! As if that was such a precious good thing!

Post.—Hem, hem, hem! "Stupid as an owl! The postmaster is also a good fellow"—— (Stops.) He has written something not very nice about me.

Pre.—Go on; read it!

Post.—What's the good?

Pre.—Oh, the devil take it! If it's read at all, read it properly, read every word!

Art.—Here, give it me. I'll read it! (Reads.) "The postmaster is for all the world like the porter in our department, Metcheef, and probably drinks bitters to the same extent, the scamp!"

Post.—Wretched young rascal! He ought to be flogged, that is all!

Art.—(Reads.) "The superintendent of the hospital"—— (Stops.)

Karo.—Why don't you go on?

Art.—The writing's rather hard to read, but evidently he's a good-for-nothing fellow.

Karo.—Here, give it to me. I've got better eyes than you have.

Art.—No, no, we will leave that passage out. It is plainer further on.

Karo.—No, give it to me. I know all about it.

Art.—Well, if it is to be read, I will read it myself, but a little further on it is all right—quite clearly written!

Post.—No, no, read the whole thing! We have read all that went before.

All.—Give the letter up, Artemie, to Karopkin. Now, then, go on!

Art.—Directly, directly—look here, here's the place—begin here (pointing with his finger).

Post.—No, no, that's all rot—go right through it.

Karo.—(Reads.) "The superintendent of the hospitals, Zemlianka, is a regular pig in a skull-cap."

Art.—It isn't even witty. Pig in a skull-cap! Whoever saw a pig in a skull-cap!

Karo.—(Reads.) "The school director stinks like anything of onions."

Luka.—I like that! I never put an onion into my mouth in my life.

Ammos.—(Aside.) Thank heaven, there is nothing about me in it.

Karo.—(Reads.) "The judge"——

Ammos.—(Aside.) By Jove, there it is. (Aloud.) Gentlemen, I think the letter is rather long and tedious, what's the good of reading all this trash?

Post.—No, no, read it all!

Art.—Go on!

Karo.—(Reads.) "The judge, Liapkin Tiapkin, is a man thoroughly mauvais ton," that must be a French word, I should say.

Ammos.—Heaven only knows what it means. It is well if it only means scoundrel, but it may be something worse still.

Karo.—(Reads.) "However, on the whole they are good-natured, hospitable people. Good-bye, my dear Tryapitchkin. I think I will follow your example and take to literature; it's a stupid thing to live as I do. I want some food for the mind; I see one ought to go in for something higher. Write to me to the Saratoff District, to the village Padkeletovka." Here is the address, "Ivan Vassilievitch, Tryapitchkin, St. Petersburg, Post Office street, No. 97, round the corner in the yard, third-story to the right."

Guests.—Well, this is a slap in the face we hardly expected.

Pre.—Well, I am completely done with a vengeance. Killed! killed! I can't see anything! (Waving his hands.) I see what look like snouts, pigs' snouts, instead of faces, and nothing more. Bring me back that fellow, bring him back!

Post.—Bring him back! Easier said than done. I ordered the overseer to give him the best post-chase he had and three horses, and some demon inspired me give him a letter forwarding him along the whole road.

Karo.'s Wife.—Here's a pretty thing, certainly!

Ammos.—Confound it! He got three hundred rubles out of me.

Luka.—Three hundred out of me, too!

Bob.—And out of Peter Ivanovitch and me, sixty-five rubles paper money. Yes, indeed!

Ammos.—How did it all happen, gentlemen; how on earth was it we got fooled like this?

Pre.—How? How? Why, I was simply an old idiot, that's what I was. I have outlived my wits, stupid old sheep that I am! Here I have been thirty years in the Government service, not a single shopkeeper, not a contractor has ever got the better of me. I have cheated swindler after swindler. I have played rogues and cheaters who could rob the whole world. I have humbugged three governors! What am I

talking about? Humbug a governor, indeed! Any fool can humbug a governor.

Anna.—But there must be some mistake! He is engaged to our Maria.

Pre.—Engaged, indeed! He has made a fool of you, that is what his being engaged comes to. Here, look at me, let everybody have a good look at me, let the whole world, let the whole of Christendom stare at me and see how the Prefect's been fooled! (Threatening himself with his fist.) You idiot! you idiot! you old blackguard! To take up a pipe-stem of a fellow, a mere rag of a chap like that, as a man of importance. See where he gallops along the road to the jingle of the bells. He will carry the story through the whole world. It is not merely that we should be made laughing-stocks, but some confounded paper-spoiling, quill-driving blackguard will be found to put us in a comedy, that's the worst of it! He won't spare rank or calling, and everyone will grin from ear to ear and clap his hands. Who are you laughing at? At yourselves, at yourselves! Oh, you—— (Stamping in his rage.) I'd have all these paper-spoilers and your quill-drivers and your cursed Liberals—the devil's spawn, I'd have them all tied up in a bunch, rubbed in flour and dropped into hell. I can't collect my thoughts. Ah, it is true, when God wishes to punish anyone, he first takes away his wits from him. What was there in this whipper-snapper a bit like a Government Inspector? He was not like one in the least! There was not the slightest resemblance. All at once everyone was in full cry, inspector, inspector! Who first gave out he was an inspector? Tell me, somebody.

Art.—If you were to kill me, I could not explain in the least how it happened. It seems to me that we were in a regular fog; the devil himself deceived us.

Ammos.—Oh, as for who first gave it out, why, of course, it was those two fine fellows, Dobchinsky and Bobchinsky.

Bob.—I really, I—I never thought——

Dob.—As for me—I assure you nothing was——

Art.—Of course, it was you!

Luka.—Of course, it was! You came running like men possessed from the inn. "He is come," you said, "and he doesn't pay for anything." Precious mare's nest you found!

Pre.—Yes, it was you, I swear, you damned liars, you scandalmongers!

Art.—Go to the devil with your stories and your inspectors!

Pre.—All you do is to gad about the town and worry everybody, you cursed chatterers. You tell stories about your neighbors and backbite everybody. You chattering magpies you——

Ammos.—Bungling idiots!

Luka.—Dunderheaded fools!

Art.—Short-bellied toadstools!

Bob.—I swear it was not I—it was Peter Ivanovitch!

Dob.—No, Peter Ivanovitch, it was you that first said——

Bob.—It was not—you were the first.

Enter Gendarme.

Gendarme.—An official has come from St. Petersburg on special duty, who requires your immediate attendance. He is staying at the inn.

(All present are thunderstruck by these words, and a cry of amazement bursts from all the ladies. The whole group remains as if it were turned to stone.)

To anyone acquainted with Nicolai Gogol's dramatic style it will pass without saying that *The Inspector* ranks as one of his completest stage productions, and, perhaps, as the one which best of all reflects its author's genius and the spirit of the times and surroundings amid which it was written. After making necessary allowance for the difficulty of maintaining in a translation all the little colorings and by-plays of an original, it is still evident, on even a casual perusal of the play, that the author intended to make it his chef-d'œuvre. This is inferable from every phase of its merits, and, indeed, was as

good as proclaimed when the author insisted on a personal supervision of its first appearance on the stage.

A leading merit of its ensemble is its fidelity to existing social and official conditions. Though a lengthy play, the author has never found himself in need of spirited situations. Its action is ever sprightly and well sustained. The characters are true to themselves, homely yet keenly observant, witty in their way, and at proper times guilty of that quaint satire whose introduction as a corrective of evils in state and society was a prime object of the author. The plot is tame, but this is overlooked in the variety and sprightliness of the action and in the success of the dénouement.

IN THE DEPTHS

(NA DNIE)

BY

MAXIM GORKI

(ALEXEI MAXIMOVITCH PIESHKOV)

Translated, chiefly from the Dumoulin edition, by

W. H. H. CHAMBERS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MIKHAIL IVANOVITCH KOSTYLEV, 54 years old; proprietor of a lodging-house.

VASILISA KARPOVNA, 26 years old; his wife.

NATASHA, 20 years old; her sister.

ABRAM MEDVEDEV, 50 years old; their uncle, policeman.

VASKA PEPEL, 28 years old.

ANDREI MITRICH KLESCH, 40 years old; locksmith.

ANNA, 30 years old; his wife.

NASTYA, 24 years old.

KVASNYA, about 40 years of age; pastry peddler.

BUBNOV, 45 years old, cap-maker.

SATIN, about 40 years of age.

THE ACTOR, about the same age.

THE BARON, 33 years of age.

LUKA, 60 years of age; tramp.

ALUSHKA, 20 years of age; shoemaker.

ZHOB KRIVOY, a laborer.

THE TARTAR, a laborer.

A number of unnamed vagabonds, male and female

In the Depths.

ARGUMENT.

In a low night-lodging house the very dregs of Russian life are assembled. The proprietor's wife, Vasilisa, has a liaison with Vaska Pepel, who, from early childhood up, having been always called by society "son of a thief" and "thief," has long since become one. He has grown tired of his mistress and now loves her sister, Natasha. Vasilisa learns this and promises to give him her sister in marriage if he will murder her (Vasilisa's) husband. Vaska refuses and shortly afterward proposes to Natasha. The mistress, unseen, overhears this proposal, and when Natasha goes into the proprietor's room a samovar filled with scalding water is upset over her. In the fight which follows Vaska strikes the husband, who dies. Vasilisa triumphantly announces that Vaska is her lover; that he has intentionally killed her husband, and sends for the police. Vaska in a passion exclaims that Vasilisa, herself, had asked him to kill her husband; whereupon Natasha accuses them of being accomplices, and declares the proposal merely a scheme to bring about the murder. Vasilisa and Vaska are cast into prison and Natasha disappears.

But into this "graveyard filled with bodies of prematurely buried people" there enters one serene spirit, the "over-tramp" Luka—many of whose apothegms have already become proverbial in Russia. His words and acts and their effect upon his fellow-lodgers caused a brilliant Russian critic to say: "This drama is a song; it is a hymn to humanity. It is awful and joyful. Seeing in the depths decaying, abandoned people you say to your conscience: 'They are already dead; they no longer feel.' And you are reconciled, at peace, whatever may happen to them. But suddenly you retreat in horror. They are still alive! A marvellous spectacle of indescribable beauty presents itself to your eyes. Beneath the muck, beneath filth, ugliness, vice, loathsomeness, horror, in a night-lodging house, among the dregs—the human personality still lives!"

ACT I.

A cavern-like cellar. The ceiling, arched in stone, is black with smoke and filth. Light enters from the front and also through a square window placed high on the right. The right-hand corner, separated from the rest of the room by a slight partition, forms Pepel's bed-room. Near the door in the partition is Bubnov's bunk—simply a sleeping-shelf. The left-hand corner is occupied by a huge Russian stove. In the left wall is a door leading into the kitchen, where Kvasnya, the Baron and Nastya live. Between the door and the stove is a large bed, hidden by a dirty calico curtain. All around the walls, in tiers, are bunks which, like Bubnov's, are simply wooden shelves.

In the foreground is a block on which there is an anvil and a vice; nearby a lower block. Klesch is seated in front of the anvil fitting keys to old locks; at his feet are two large

bunches of used keys, a badly battered samovar, a hammer and some files. In the center is a large table, two benches and a stool—all unpainted and dirty. At the table and near the samovar Kvasnya sits. The Baron is eating black bread and Nastya, with her elbows on the table, is reading a well-thumbed book. On the bed behind the curtain Anna coughs. Bubnov, seated on his bunk, is laying an old pair of ripped-up pantaloons over a cap-form, figuring out how many caps he can make of it. Near him is an old hat box containing visors, pieces of old oilcloth, etc. Satin, who has just awakened, is stretched out in his bunk groaning. On the stove the actor, invisible, coughs.

The beginning of Spring—morning.

Baron.—And then?

Kvasnya.—Oh, no, my dear, no thens for me. I tell you I've already tried it, and I wouldn't get married, no, not for a hundred well-baked crabs.

Bubnov.—(To Satin.) What are you growling about?

(Satin continues to groan.)

Kvasnya.—Do you think that I, a free woman, master of myself, would allow my name to be inscribed on the passport of any man? Never: not if he's an American prince!

Klesch.—You lie.

Kvasnya.—What?

Klesch.—You lie. You'd marry Abramka.

Baron.—(Snatches the book from Nastya and reads the title.) "The Fatal Love." (Bursts into a loud laugh.)

Nastya.—(Holding out her hand.) Give it to me. Hand it back. Come, now, no fooling!

Baron.—(Striking Nastya on the head with the book.) You're the fool!

Kvasnya.—(To Klesch.) You red billy-goat! Tell me I lie! How dare you use such insolent words to me?

Baron.—(Striking Nastya on the head with the book.) What a fool you are!

Nastya.—(Grabbing the book.) Give it to me.

Klesch.—My, what a grand lady! You'd marry Abramka just the same—that's all you're waiting for.

Kvasnya.—Sure! Why not? You'd better, however, be looking after your own wife whom you've already more than half killed.

Klesch.—Shut up, you old bitch! It's none of your business.

Kvasnya.—Ah! you don't like to hear the truth.

Baron.—It's beginning! Nastya where are you?

Nastya.—(Without raising her eyes.) Oh, let me alone!

Anna.—(Putting her head through the bed curtains.) It's beginning! For heaven's sake don't hollow so—don't quarrel!

Klesch.—Starting in on the same old story, eh?

Anna.—Every blessed day! Let me, at least, die in peace.

Bubnov.—Noise won't keep anyone from dying.

Kvasnya.—(Walking over to Anna's bed.) How have you ever been able to live with such a brute?

Anna.—I implore you, don't!

Kvasnya.—You poor patient creature! Does your breast feel easier?

Baron.—Kvasnya, it's time to go to market.

Kvasnya.—All right, let's go. (To Anna.) Wouldn't you like some nice hot food?

Anna.—No, thanks. What use is it to eat?

Kvasnya.—Eat just the same; heat relieves. I'll leave some in a bowl and you can eat it when you like. Come, Baron. (To Klesch.) Huh! you evil spirit!

(Goes out through the kitchen door.)

Anna.—(Coughing.) O, Lord!

Baron.—(Striking Nastya on the nape of the neck.) Quit it, silly!

Nastya.—Get out! I'm not disturbing you.

Baron.—(Whistling, follows Kvasnya into the kitchen.)

Satin.—(Rising in his bunk.) Who trounced me yesterday?

Bubnov.—What difference does that make, who?

Satin.—No difference I suppose. But why was I trounced?

Bubnov.—Well, you played cards, didn't you?

Satin.—Yes, I played cards.

Bubnov.—There you have it.

Satin.—The scoundrels!

The Actor.—(Showing his head above the stove.) Some day they'll do you up completely.

Satin.—You're an ass!

The Actor.—Why so?

Satin.—Because they never do a man up twice.

The Actor.—(After a pause.) I don't understand—why can't they?

Klesch.—Come now, get down from that stove and tidy up things a bit—no loafing!

The Actor.—Whether I loaf or not it's none of your business, is it?

Klesch.—Vasilisa is coming soon and she'll show you whose business it is.

The Actor.—Devil take Vasilisa! It's the Baron's turn today to clean up. Hey, Baron!

Baron.—(Entering from the kitchen.) I haven't time to clean up. I'm going to market with Kvasnya.

The Actor.—That's nothing to me. You can go to the devil, if you like, but it's your turn to sweep just the same, and I'm not going to do others' work.

Baron.—Go to the devil yourself! Nastya will sweep. Say there, "Fatal Love," come to your senses.

(Snatches the book from Nastya.)

Nastya.—(Rising.) What do you want? Give it to me, you blackguard. And it calls itself a Baron!

Baron.—(Handing her the book.) Nastya sweep for me, won't you?

Nastya.—(Going into the kitchen.) What do you take me for?

Kvasnya.—(Standing in the kitchen door, to the Baron.) Are you coming? They can clean-up without you. Hey, Actor, you've been asked, do it. You won't break in two.

The Actor.—That's the way!—always me! I don't understand——

Baron.—(Brings from the kitchen a pair of baskets suspended from a wooden bar. The pannier contains earthenware pots covered with old muslin.) It's rather heavy to-day.

Satin.—Well, why be born a Baron——?

Kvasnya.—(To the Actor.) You'll sweep then, eh? (She follows the Baron out through the rear door.)

The Actor.—(Descending from the stove.) Dust is very injurious to me. (Proudly.) My organism is poisoned by alcohol. (Sits down on his bunk.)

Satin.—Organism—organon—on——

Anna.—Andrei Mitrich.

Klesch.—What now?

Anna.—Kvasnya left me something there to eat—you eat it.

Klesch.—(Going towards her.) Don't you want to eat anything?

Anna.—No—what's the use of my eating? You work, and you need it.

Klesch.—Then you're afraid that—— Don't be afraid—perhaps, still——

Anna.—Go and eat. I feel so bad; the end is probably near.

Klesch.—(Leaving.) Who knows? perhaps you'll come around all right yet. That sometimes happens, you know. (Goes into the kitchen.)

The Actor.—(Aloud as if awakening from a dream.) At the hospital yesterday the doctor told me: "Your organism is entirely poisoned by alcohol."

Satin.—(Smiling.) Organon.

The Actor.—(Insisting.) Not organon, but or-gan-ism.

Satin.—Sicambre!

The Actor.—No nonsense! I'm talking seriously—I am. If the organism is poisoned by alcohol, then it follows, of course, that it's injurious to sweep—to breathe dust.

Satin.—Ah! microbiotic!

The Actor.—What's that you're muttering?

Satin.—Just words—there's transcendental too!

Bubnov.—What do they mean?

Satin.—I don't know—I've forgotten.

Bubnov.—Then why repeat them?

Satin.—Oh I've heard quite enough of the ordinary words of men. I've heard each of them a thousand times at least.

The Actor.—"Words, words, words," they say in Hamlet. Fine piece that. I've played the grave digger——

Klesch.—(Coming out of the kitchen.) Now you'd better play the broom.

The Actor.—It's none of your business! (Strikes his breast.) "The fair Ophelia. Nymph, in thy orisons be all my sins remember'd." (From behind the scenes comes the noise of a struggle, cries and a policeman's whistle. Klesch immediately begins filing.)

Satin.—I'm very fond of rare, incomprehensible words. When I was a youngster I worked in a telegraph office. I've read lots of books.

Bubnov.—So you worked in a telegraph office too, did you?

Satin.—Yes. There are lots of good books and curious words—I was well-read, I tell you.

Bubnov.—Well, I've heard you tell it at least a hundred times! You "was!" What does that amount to? I "was," also. I was a furrier; had my own shop; had my hands all yellow from dyeing furs—yes yellow all the way up to my elbows—thought they would remain so 'til I died, and now you see they're simply—dirty—yes, simply dirty.

Satin.—Well?

Bubnov.—That's all.

Satin.—Then what were you driving at?

Bubnov.—Nothing much—simply a reflection—which goes to prove that you can stain yourself as much as you please, but that time will wash everything out—yes, everything.

The Actor.—Education don't amount to anything; the thing that counts is talent. I once knew an actor that could scarcely read his part, yet the theatre was shaken with applause when he performed.

Satin.—Bubnov, give me five kopecks.

Bubnov.—I've got only two.

The Actor.—I say that talent is the one thing needful. And talent is merely having faith in one's self—in one's own power——

Satin.—Give me five kopecks, and I'll believe that you're a genius or a hero, a crocodile or a policeman. Klesch, you give me five kopecks.

Klesch.—Go to the devil! There are plenty of beggars of your stripe.

Satin.—Why growl so when we know you haven't a kopeck? We know you haven't.

Anna.—Andrei, I'm suffocating!

Klesch.—Well, what can I do?

Bubnov.—Open the entry door.

Klesch.—Hump, you're smart! Sitting up there nice and warm while I'm here on the ground; let me have your place and then you can open the door as much as you like. I'm cold enough.

Bubnov.—(Calmly.) I don't want the door open; it's your wife that wants it.

Klesch.—Oh, there're plenty of people with lots of wants!

Satin.—My, how that hurts my head! Oh, why do they pound us on the head?

Bubnov.—They not only pound your head, but all other parts of your body. (Rises.) I must buy some thread. I wonder where all my customers are to-day? (He leaves.)

Anna.—(Coughs. Satin remains immobile holding his head.)

The Actor.—(Looks around sadly and walks towards Anna.) Well, feeling badly, are you?

Anna.—I'm suffocating.

The Actor.—I'll help you out into the entry if you like? Come, get up. (He helps her up, throws some rags around her shoulders, and then leads her towards the entry. Steady now! I'm also sick, myself—poisoned by alcohol——

Kostylev.—(Appearing at the door.) Taking a stroll? A pretty couple!

The Actor.—Well, you might at least get out of the way! Don't you see that it's two invalids coming!

Kostylev.—Pass by, then. (While humming a hymn he looks suspiciously around and inclines his head towards the left as if listening particularly for sounds in Pepel's bed room. Meanwhile Klesch loudly rattles his keys and files vigorously, constantly watching the landlord out of the corner of his eye.) Always filing?

Klesch.—What?

Kostylev.—Working, I asked? (A pause.) Oh, yes, I came to ask you something. (Rapidly, in a low voice.) Has my wife been here?

Klesch.—I haven't seen her.

Kostylev.—(Moving cautiously towards Pepel's door.) What a lot of room you take up for two rubles a month! Your bed, and then all this stuff. Yes, five rubles wouldn't be a bit too much. I'll have to charge you half a ruble more.

Klesch.—Better charge me with a noose and hang me! You're about ready to die, yet you're always thinking of half rubles!

Kostylev.—Why hang you? What good would that do? God keep you! Live and enjoy yourself; while I, with the half ruble more that you will give me, shall buy oil for my shrine-lamp and hang it before the holy images as a sacrifice for my sins—and yours. Why do you never think of your sins? Ah! you're a wicked man, Andrei! Your wife is dying on account of your wickedness. No one loves or respects you. Your work is noisy and troublesome to everybody.

Klesch.—(Loudly.) Did you come here to insult me? (Satin groans.)

Kostylev.—(Trembling.) Oh! little father——

The Actor.—(Entering.) I've made a place for the woman in the entry, and covered her all up.

Kostylev.—You're a good fellow! You'll be repaid.

The Actor.—When?

Kostylev.—In the next world, my brother. All our acts are recorded.

The Actor.—You might do better and repay my kindness here.

Kostylev.—In what way?

The Actor.—By forgiving half my debt.

Kostylev.—You're always joking, my good fellow! As if kindness of heart could be repaid in money! Kindness is the most precious of treasures. As to the sum due me, that is, of course, still due; therefore, you must pay me; but there's no must about the repayment of your kindness.

The Actor.—You're a scoundrel, old man! (He goes into the kitchen.)

(Klesch gets up and goes into the entry.)

Kostylev.—(To Satin.) Did you notice? The filer has flown. Ha! ha! ha! He's not fond of me.

Satin.—Who is—except the devil?

Kostylev.—(Smiling.) What insolence! Nevertheless, I'm really fond of you all, my unfortunate, good-for-nothing, ruined brothers. (Quickly.) Is Vaska there?

Satin.—Go look!

Kostylev.—(Knocking on Pepel's door.) Vaska!

(The Actor appears in the kitchen door chewing something.)

Pepel.—(Behind the partition.) Who's there?

Kostylev.—I—I, Vaska.

Pepel.—What do you want?

Kostylev.—(Moving aside.) Open the door.

Satin.—(Without looking at Kostylev.) Oh, he'll open—and she's there!

The Actor.—(Aside, laughs.)

Kostylev.—(Disturbed, in a low tone.) Why, who's there? What did you say?

Satin.—What's that? Talking to me?

Kostylev.—What did you say?

Satin.—Oh, nothing; just talking to myself.

Kostylev.—Look out! Don't joke too much. (Knocks harder.) Vaska!

Pepel.—(Opening the door.) Well, what are you bothering me for?

Kostylev.—(Glancing in the bedroom.) I—you see—I——

Pepel.—Did you bring the money?

Kostylev.—I want to talk to you.

Pepel.—But the money?

Kostylev.—What money? Wait a moment.

Pepel.—The seven rubles for the watch—well?

Kostylev.—What watch do you mean, Vaska?

Vasko.—Look out! Yesterday, in the presence of witnesses, I sold you a watch for ten rubles. I received three. Give me the seven you still owe. What are you squinting about? Instead of attending to business you come here to bother me.

Kostylev.—Don't get mad, Vaska. You see the watch——

Satin.—Was stolen.

Kostylev.—(Severely.) I don't buy stolen things. How can you——

Pepel.—(Shaking Kostylev by the shoulder.) What did you come here to annoy me for? What do you want anyway?

Kostylev.—Oh, nothing. I'll go, since you act this way.

Pepel.—Go; and bring me the money.

Kostylev.—(As he is leaving.) What brutes! Akh! Akh!

The Actor.—'Tis a true comedy.

Satin.—Good! That's what I like.

Pepel.—What brought him here?

Satin.—Why, don't you know? He came here to hunt up his wife. And why didn't you do him up, once for all, Vaska?

Pepel.—Is it worth while spoiling all my life for that wretch?

Satin.—Do it intelligently. Then you can marry Vasilisa and become our landlord.

Pepel.—What a pleasure! Then you'd drink up not only all I have, but you'd peach and so drink me up besides. (Sitting down on a bunk.) Old devil! He woke me up, and I was having such a fine dream, too! I dreamt I had caught an enormous fish, and I was just about to spear it when——

Satin.—That wasn't a fish, that was Vasilisa.

The Actor.—Oh, he caught Vasilisa long ago.

Pepel.—(Angrily.) Go to the devil! and she with you.

Klesch.—(Entering.) It's cold enough to freeze a dog.

The Actor.—Why didn't you bring Anna in? she'll freeze.

Klesch.—Natasha carried her into the kitchen.

The Actor.—The old man will drive her out.

Klesch.—(Beginning to work.) Well, then, Natasha can bring her here.

Satin.—Vaska, give me five kopecks.

The Actor.—What! five kopecks? Say, Vaska, give us twenty.

Pepel.—I'd better give them to you quickly, else you'll be wanting a ruble. Here!

Satin.—Gibraltar-r-r! No better fellows than thieves!

Klesch.—(Dolefully.) They make easy money. They don't work.

Satin.—Easy money comes to many, but few part with it easily. Work? Contrive to make work agreeable to me, and then, perhaps, I'll work, too. Yes, perhaps. When work is a pleasure, life is pleasant. When work is obligatory, life is slavery. (To the Actor.) Come, Sardanapalus, let's go.

The Actor.—Yes, let's go, Nebuchadnezzar; I want to get as full as forty thousand drunkards. (He and Satin leave.)

Pepel.—(Yawning.) How is your wife getting?

Klesch.—Pretty nearly played out. (A pause.)

Pepel.—I look at you filing, and I think what useless toil and trouble.

Klesch.—What should I do?

Pepel.—Nothing.

Klesch.—Then how could I eat?

Pepel.—As many do——

Klesch.—What! like those fellows? Are they men? Do they work? I'm a worker. I feel ashamed of them every time I see them. I've worked since childhood. Do you think I won't get out of here? I shall. It may cost me my skin, but I'll get out. I'm waiting only for my wife to die. I've been here six months. It seems six years.

Pepel.—That's not the right way to talk You're no better than the others.

Klesch.—No better? They live without conscience, without honor——

Pepel.—(Indifferently.) What good would honor and conscience do them—wouldn't shoe them, surely! Conscience and honor are all right for those who have power and force.

Bubnov.—(Entering.) Oh, I'm frozen!

Pepel.—Bubnov, have you any conscience?

Bubnov.—What, conscience?

Pepel.—Why, yes.

Bubnov.—What for? I'm not rich!

Pepel.—That's what I said, myself. Honor and conscience are for the wealthy. And here's Klesch who abuses us for having no conscience!

Bubnov.—Why, does he want to borrow some?

Pepel.—Oh, he has plenty of his own.

Bubnov.—Then, perhaps, he'd like to sell some? But that's an unsalable article here. Now, if it was old cardboard for caps, I'd buy some myself—on credit, of course.

Pepel.—(Sententiously.) You're an ass, Andrei! You'd better listen to Satin's or the Baron's views on conscience.

Klesch.—I don't want to talk to them.

Pepel.—They've got more brains than you, even if they are drunkards.

Bubnov.—He that is both drunk and wise is doubly wise.

Pepel.—Satin says: "Everyone wishes his neighbor to have a conscience, but there's no advantage in possessing one;" and that's true.

Enter Natasha followed by Luka, who has a staff in his hand, a wallet on his back and a leather purse and tin tea-pot suspended from his belt.

Luka.—Good-day, my good people!

Pepel.—(Stroking his mustache.) Ah, Natasha!

Bubnov.—(To Luka.) Good people! They were but——

Natasha.—I'm bringing you a new lodger.

Luka.—(To Bubnov.) It's all the same to me. I respect even thieves. To me not a flea is bad: they're all black, and they all jump So be it! And where am I to bunk, my dear?

Natasha.—(Pointing to the kitchen door.) Go through there, grandfather.

Luka.—Thanks, my daughter; where warmth is, that is the place for an old man.

Pepel.—What an interesting old fellow you've brought us, Natasha!

Natasha.—Certainly more interesting than you. Andrei, your wife is in the kitchen—come get her soon.

Klesch.—All right!

Natasha.—You ought to be a little more kind to her, now that——

Klesch.—I know——

Natasha.—You know! but it is not enough to know; you must comprehend. It's fearful to die.

Pepel.—Well, I'm not afraid to die.

Natasha.—My, how courageous!

Bubnov.—(Whistling.) This thread's good for nothing.

Pepel.—It's true, I'm not afraid—I'm willing to die at once. Just take a knife and plunge it into my heart. I'd die without saying "ouch!" Yes, die joyfully, since the blow would be struck by a pure hand.

Natasha.—(Walking away.) Oh, go tell that to the marines! (At the door.) Don't forget your wife, Andrei.

Klesch.—All right, all right!

Pepel.—Fine girl, that!

Bubnov.—Not so bad!

Pepel.—But what has she against me? She repulses me; but she's bound to be ruined here, nevertheless.

Bubnov.—She'd certainly be ruined by you.

Pepel.—Why by me? I pity her.

Bubnov.—Like the wolf pities the lamb——

Pepel.—It's not so. I really pity her. Life is hard here.

Klesch.—Just wait till Vasilisa catches you talking to her.

Bubnov.—Vasilisa! there's a shrew for you; she can take care of her prey!

Pepel.—Go to the devil, all you prophets!

Klesch.—Wait! You'll see!

Luka.—(Singing in the kitchen.) "On a dark night the pathway can't be seen."

Klesch.—(Going toward the entry.) Another howler!

Pepel.—I'm sad, and yet I don't know why. Life runs on regularly, even happily, and yet all of a sudden I feel as if I were chilled to the marrow; I'm sad.

Bubnov.—You're sad, eh?

Pepel.—That's right.

Luka.—(Singing.) "Hey, the pathway can't be seen."

Pepel.—Say, there, old man!

Luka.—(In the doorway.) Speaking to me?

Pepel.—Yes, to you. Don't sing.

Luka.—Don't you like it?

Pepel.—Yes, when it's well done.

Luka.—You mean that I sing badly?

Pepel.—That's what I mean.

Luka.—There you see now! And I thought my singing was good. That's just the way it always happens; people think their acts good, when suddenly they discover that others think them bad.

Pepel.—(Laughing.) That's true.

Bubnov.—You say you're sad, and yet you laugh?

Pepel.—What's that to you, bird of ill-omen!

Luka.—Who's sad?

Pepel.—I am.

Enter the Baron.

Luka.—There you are again. Out yonder in the kitchen a young woman is reading a book and crying—yes, actually shedding tears. I asked: "What are you crying about?" She replied: "I pity them." "Who?" "The people in the book." Amusing herself, if you please! Probably because she's sad also.

Baron.—No, that's stupidity.

Pepel.—Have you had your tea, Baron?

Baron.—Yes, what of it?

Pepel.—Would you like me to buy a small bottle for you?

Baron.—Sure! What then?

Pepel.—Then get down on your hands and knees and bark like a dog.

Baron.—What for, you idiot? Are you a rich merchant or merely drunk?

Pepel.—Bark, I tell you, bark! That'll amuse me. You're a baron, and there was a time when you didn't consider the rest of us hardly human.

Baron.—Well, what of it?

Pepel.—Now I'm going to make you bark like a dog, and you'll do it; come now, you'll do it, won't you, Baron?

Baron.—Well—yes, I'll do it, you blockhead! But what possible pleasure can that be to you, now that I realize myself that I have fallen lower than you? You should have tried to make me walk on all fours when I was your better.

Bubnov.—Well said!

Luka.—Well said, indeed!

Bubnov.—What has been, has been, and nothing remains. There are no lords here—that's all wiped out—nothing remains but man—naked man.

Luka.—Which means that we're all equal. So you've been a baron, have you, brother?

Baron.—Who's this fellow?

Luka.—(Laughs.) I've seen before now a count and some princes, but this is the first time that I have ever seen a baron —a baron gone to the dogs too!

Pepel.—(Laughing.) Baron, I'm ashamed of you!

Baron.—It's time you had a little more sense in your head, Vaska.

Luka.—Ha! ha! I look at you brothers and say to myself: Akh, what a life you lead!

Bubnov.—Such a life that no sooner are eyes open than howling begins.

Baron.—'Twas better once. Now I, for example, have seen the time when I took my coffee in bed—coffee with cream, too, I want you to understand!

Luka.—Nevertheless, we're all merely men—human beings. In vain we clothe the naked or pretend to be this or that. We're born merely human beings, and merely human beings we die. To my mind man is constantly growing more keen of mind and —more amusing. Ever living worse and worse, yet always aspiring after better things; the mule!

Baron.—And you, old man, what are you?

Luka.—I?

Baron.—A tramp?

Luka.—We're all tramps; travellers upon this earth. I am told that even the earth itself travels in the skies.

Baron.—(Sternly.) Yes, that's true—but have you a passport?

Luka.—(After a pause.) And are you—a spy?

Pepel.—(Joyously.) Good! good, old man! Did that cut you, Baron?

Bubnov.—Well, the Baron didn't steal it.

Baron.—(Confused.) I was—only joking, old man. I've no papers myself.

Bubnov.—That's a lie.

Baron.—I mean, I've papers, but they're good for nothing.

Luka.—They're all good for nothing. Papers don't make a man.

Pepel.—And now, Baron, let's go to the dram-shop.

Baron.—At your service. Old man, you're a rascal!

Luka.—There are so many, my dear fellow.

Pepel.—(In the doorway.) Say, aren't you coming?
(He and the Baron leave.)

Luka.—Is it really true that he was a baron?

Bubnov.—Who knows? Certainly he was an aristocrat. That shows from time to time—he isn't entirely rid of his former habits.

Luka.—Yes, nobility is like small-pox; you may be cured, but the scars always remain.

Bubnov.—But he's not such a bad fellow—only breaks out occasionally as he did, for instance, about your passport.

Enter Alushka half drunk, carrying an accordion and whistling.

Alushka.—Hey, there, lodgers!

Bubnov.—What are you yelling about?

Alushka.—Beg pardon! Excuse me! I'm a polite man, I am.

Bubnov.—On another spree?

Alushka.—Oh, after a fashion. Just now they kicked me out of the police station, saying: "Get off the street, do you understand?" I'm a man of character, I am. My master he's a drunkard, he is; and I'm a man that wants nothing; understand, nothing. If you want to, you can buy me all complete for one ruble and twenty kopecks. (Nastya comes out of the kitchen.) Offer me a million, I wouldn't want it. I want nothing. But what a shame for a good fellow like me to have a drunkard for a master.

(Nastya stands near the door and gazes at Alushka, shaking her head.)

Luka.—(Good naturedly.) You're talking to hear yourself talk.

Alushka.—How am I worse than the others? They told me to get off the street; but I'll show them! I'll go stretch right out in the middle of it. Let 'em run over me; what do I care; I don't want anything.

Nastya.—Poor fellow! and still so young.

Alushka.—(Seeing her, falls on his knees.) Mam'selle, speakee Frenchee? I've been on a little spree——

Nastya.—(In a loud whisper.) Vasilisa's coming!

Vasilisa.—(Suddenly opening the door, to Alushka.) You here again?

Alushka.—Good-day—pray come in.

Vasilisa.—I've told you already never to put your foot inside the door again, you blackguard; and yet you're here?

Alushka.—Vasilisa Karpovna, wouldn't you like me to play you a funeral march?

Vasilisa.—You're too young to be barking after me. Come, get out! (He runs out.) Bubnov, he mustn't come in here any more, understand?

Bubnov.—I'm not his keeper.

Vasilisa.—I don't want to know what you are. But don't forget that you're living here on charity. How much do you owe me?

Bubnov.—(Calmly.) I haven't figured it up.

Vasilisa.—Well, look out! I'm going to figure it up.

Alushka.—(Yells through the half open door.) Vasilisa Karpovna, I'm not afraid of you. (Runs away. Luka laughs.)

Vasilisa.—And who are you?

Luka.—A traveller.

Vasilisa.—Here for the night only, or to stay awhile?

Luka.—I'll see.

Vasilisa.—Your passport?

Luka.—It'll be furnished.

Vasilisa.—Give it to me.

Luka.—I'll bring it to you.

Vasilisa.—A traveller? You'd better say a vagabond; that would be nearer the truth.

Luka.—(Sighing.) You're not very considerate, little mother.

(Vasilisa gradually gets over to Pepel's door. Alushka looks in at the kitchen door and asks in a loud whisper:)

Say, has she gone away yet?

Vasilisa.—(Turning round.) You still here? (Alushka runs off whistling. Luka and Nastya laugh.)

Bubnov.—(To Vasilisa.) He isn't there.

Vasilisa.—Who?

Bubnov.—Vaska.

Vasilisa.—Did I ask you anything about him?

Bubnov.—I saw you were looking around everywhere for——

Vasilisa.—I was looking around simply to see if everything was in order, understand? Why, haven't they swept yet? How many times have I ordered that the place must be kept clean?

Bubnov.—It's the actor's turn to sweep.

Vasilisa.—I don't care whose turn it is. But if the inspectors come and fine me, I'll kick you all out.

Bubnov.—(Calmly.) Then what will you live on?

Vasilisa.—Everything must be kept in order. (Goes toward the kitchen. To Nastya.) What are you doing here? What swelled your eyes all up? What are you standing there like a dunce for? Go sweep. Have you seen Natasha? has she been here?

Nastya.—I don't know—I haven't seen her.

Vasilisa.—Bubnov, has my sister been here?

Bubnov.—She brought him. (Pointing to Luka.)

Vasilisa.—(Pointing to Pepel's room.) And was he here then?

Bubnov.—Vaska? Oh, yes, Natasha was talking to Klesch.

Vasilisa.—I didn't ask you who she was talking to. What muck—muck everywhere! Oh, you hogs! Remember everything must be cleaned up. (Leaves.)

Bubnov.—What a ferocious beast, that woman!

Luka.—She takes things seriously.

Nastya.—Such a life would make anyone ferocious. Tied to such a husband as she has, too.

Bubnov.—Oh, she's not tied very tightly.

Luka.—And is she always like that?

Bubnov.—Always. She came to find her lover, but he wasn't here.

Luka.—That, of course, vexed her. Oh, how many, many people there are that try to make others afraid of them! Yet disorder reigns—and impurity.

Bubnov.—Still it's necessary to sweep. Nastya suppose you——

Nastya.—Not much! How long have I been your servant? (After a pause.) Oh, I just feel as if I'd like to get drunk today—dead drunk!

Bubnov.—Well, that's one way of passing the time.

Luka.—But what has made you so thirsty, my daughter? A little while ago you were crying, and now you want to drink.

Nastya.—Well, what of it? I should get drunk and then I should cry some more; that's all.

Luka.—But why? Not even a boil comes without a cause.

Nastya.—(Shakes her head and is silent.)

Luka.—What will become of the people! But I'll sweep. Where's the broom?

Bubnov.—Behind the door in the entry. (Luka leaves.)

Bubnov.—Nastya, why is Vasilisa so angry at Alushka?

Nastya.—Because he says that Vaska has had enough of her, and would like to replace her by Natasha. Oh, I'm going to leave here.

Bubnov.—Why so?

Nastya.—I've had enough. I'm one too many here.

Bubnov.—You'll be one too many everywhere; every person is, on this earth. (Nastya shakes her head and goes out through the entry.)

Enter Medvedev, followed by Luka with the broom.

Medvedev.—I don't seem to know you.

Luka.—Then you do know all other men?

Medvedev.—In my quarter I have to know everybody—but I don't seem to know you.

Luka.—Well, you see, uncle, the reason is, all the earth isn't contained in your quarter—some portions are left outside. (Goes into the kitchen.)

Medvedev.—(To Bubnov.) It's true that my quarter is not as large as some others, but it's more troublesome. Just now I took that shoemaker, Alushka, to the station-house. He was flat on his back in the middle of the street, playing his accordion and yelling at the top of his voice: "I don't want anything. I ask nothing." There were lots of wagons and a devilish confusion. He was liable to be crushed at any moment, so I ran him in. A troublesome fellow, an amateur in disorder. And Vaska?

Bubnov.—Just the same.

Medvedev.—Noticed anything between him and Vasilisa?

Bubnov.—Anything; what do you mean?

Medvedev.—Oh—like—in general— Perhaps you know but won't tell—but since everybody knows. (Severely.) Now don't lie, brother.

Bubnov.—Why should I lie?

Medvedev.—Everybody's talking about it; but, after all, I'm only her uncle, not her father.

Enter Kvasnya.

Kvasnya.—Bubnov, do you know that Medvedev again asked me to marry him!

Bubnov.—Well, why not? He's got money and is still sturdy.

Kvasnya.—No, thank you. I tried it once; that's enough. A woman might just as well throw herself into the river in cold weather as take a husband.

Medvedev.—Wait to judge. All husbands are not the same.

Kvasnya.—But I'm always the same. When my dear husband croaked, I remained home an entire day to ask myself if my happiness was really true.

Medvedev.—If your husband beat you—without reason—you should have complained to the police.

Kvasnya.—I complained to God Himself for eight years, but entirely in vain.

Medvedev.—Now, it's forbidden to beat wives. Now, it's order and severity—we beat now only to insure order.

Luka.—(Entering with Anna.) Well, we've got here. Poor woman, are you, so feeble, allowed to walk alone? Where is your place?

Anna.—(Pointing.) Thanks, grandfather.

Kvasnya.—There's a married woman for you; look at her!

Luka.—A feeble little woman! I saw her dragging herself along in the entry, leaning against the wall and moaning. Why do you let her go alone?

Kvasnya.—Excuse our neglect, little father. Her maid must have gone out for a stroll. (Laughs.)

Luka.—You laugh, and yet she is a human being; and a human being of whatever condition is always of value.

Medvedev.—Yes, we must watch over her—if she should die all of a sudden what a——

(Sounds of a struggle and cries are heard coming from the entry.)

Medvedev.—I must see what's the matter. Oh, deuce take police duty! Why separate people when they fight? They'd stop when they were exhausted. Then they wouldn't begin again so soon.

Kostylev.—(Opens the door violently and shouts.) Abram, come! quick! Vasilisa is murdering Natasha—Come!

(Kvasnya, Medvedev and Bubnov run into the entry. Luka, shaking his head, follows them with his eyes.)

Anna.—O God! Poor Natasha!

Luka.—Who is fighting there?

Anna.—The mistresses; two sisters.

Luka.—And do they have to share?

Anna.—Oh, no; they're both healthy—overfed.

Luka.—And what's your name?

Anna.—Anna. When I look at you, I can't help thinking how much you resemble my father—you, also, are kind and tender.

Luka.—I've been long and severely beaten by life; that's why I'm tender. (He laughs sadly.)

ACT II.

Scene the same. Night. On the shelf-like bunks near the stove, Satin, the Baron, Zhob Krivoy and the Tartar are playing cards. Klesch and the actor are looking on. Bubnov, on his bunk is playing checkers with Medvedev. Near Anna's bed Luka sits on a stool. The room is lighted by two lamps.

The Tartar.—One more hand and we've finished.

Bubnov.—Come, sing, Zhob. (Sings.) "The sun rises and sets"——

Zhob.—(Follows.) "But my cell is always somber."

The Tartar.—(To Satin.) No monkeying; we know what you are!

Bubnov and Zhob.—(Together.) "Day and night the sentinels watch me through the winder."

Anna.—Blows—insults—that's all I have——

Luka.—There, there, my poor woman, don't torment yourself!

Medvedev.—Where are you moving? Watch yourself!

The Tartar.—(Shaking his fist at Satin.) What are you hiding that card for? Oh, I saw it! I saw it!

Zhob.—Drop it, Hassan—let up; they're bound to get the best of us——

Anna.—I cannot remember ever having had enough food to satisfy my hunger. I trembled over each crumb—trembled for fear that I was eating more than my share. I've been in rags all my wretched life. Yes, in rags. Why?

Luka.—There, there, my daughter! You're tired. Courage!

The Actor.—(To Zhob Krivoy.) The devil! Play the Jack.

Baron.—And we have the King.

Klesch.—Somehow they always win.

Anna.—And now I'm dying.

Klesch.—Look! look! (To the Tartar.) Prince, throw up the cards; throw them up, I say!

Baron.—Look out, Andrei, that I don't throw you—to the devil!

Klesch.—(Shaking his head, goes over to Bubnov.)

Anna.—And I'm always thinking: Good God! is it possible that I must forever suffer in the other world too? Suffer forever there too? Is it possible?

Luka.—No, no, my dear, make yourself easy! You'll be at rest there! Courage! Everyone in this world suffers—each in his own way. (Rises and walks rapidly into the kitchen.)

Bubnov.—(Sings.) "Watch as I may."

Zhob.—(Follows.) "I cannot flee." (Together.) "Oh, to break my chains, for I long to be free!"

The Tartar.—(Who has continued to play. Shouts.) That's it! hide the card up your sleeve!

Baron.—(Confused.) Well, where would you have me hide it; up your nose?

The Actor.—(Persuasively.) Prince, you're mistaken. No one here ever——

The Tartar.—I saw it. Swindler! I'll play no more.

Satin.—(Picking up the cards.) Give us a rest, Hassan. That we're swindlers, you've known for ever so long. Then why play?

Baron.—He's lost forty kopecks, and makes noise enough for three rubles! And he's a prince, too!

The Tartar.—(Indignantly.) You ought to play honestly.

Satin.—What for?

The Tartar.—What for? You ask what for?

Satin.—Yes, certainly; what for?

The Tartar.—And you don't know?

Satin.—No; and you—do you know? (The Tartar, furious, spits. The others laugh.)

Zhob.—(Good-naturedly.) What a freak you are, Hassan! Come, now; can't you understand that if they began to live honestly they'd die of hunger inside of three days?

The Tartar.—That's none of my business; they ought to live honestly just the same.

Zhob.—(Singing.) "Oh, my chains, my chains!" Come, Hassanka. (They leave, Zhob singing and the Tartar shaking his fist at the Baron.)

Satin.—(To the Baron, laughing.) So, your excellency, you've put your foot in it again, have you? You, an educated man, and don't know even how to juggle a card up your sleeve without being caught! Educated, too!

The Actor.—He lacks talent—faith in himself; and without that——

Satin.—Winnings, fifty-three kopecks.

The Actor.—The three kopecks for me. But why, after all, do I need three kopecks?

Luka.—(Coming in from the kitchen.) Well, you cleaned up the Tartar? Going out to drink now, I suppose.

Baron.—Come with us.

Satin.—I'd really like to see you full.

Luka.—I should be no better then than I am now.

The Actor.—Come on, old man; I'll recite some verses for you.

Luka.—Verses! What for?

The Actor.—It's amusing—sometimes sad.

Satin.—Say, there, verse-spouter, are you coming? (He and the Baron leave.)

The Actor.—Go on; I'll catch up. Now, here's a poem, old man—— (Rubs his forehead.) But I've forgotten how it begins. Before my organism was poisoned by alcohol, I had an excellent memory; but now—I'm done for. I always recited that poem with great success—thunders of applause. You don't know what applause is—ah! it's like brandy, brother. When I came out I posed like this. (Strikes an attitude.) And then—— (A pause.) No, I can't remember it—not a word. My favorite poem, too. That's bad, isn't it—very bad, old man?

Luka.—It's certainly not good when we forget what we love. All our soul is in that which we love.

The Actor.—I have drunk my soul, old man—I'm ruined, brother. Know why? Because I had no faith. I'm ruined.

Luka.—There, there; you must be cured. They cure drunkenness to-day, brother—cure, free of charge. There's a special hospital for drunkards. They've recognized, you see, that a drunkard is also a man—a human being. And hence they're satisfied if he will only come to be cured. So go there.

The Actor.—(Thoughtfully.) Where?

Luka.—Why, in a city—what's it called? I'll tell you directly. Meanwhile, prepare yourself—abstain. Be courageous—restrain yourself—then you'll be cured and can begin life anew. Wouldn't that be fine, eh, brother, to start a new life? Come, decide; one, two——

The Actor.—(Smiling.) Start a new life—yes, that would be fine! (Laughs.) Oh, yes, I can—I can, can't I?

Luka.—And why not? Man can do anything; he needs but to will.

The Actor.—(As if awakening from a dream.) What a jóllier you are, old man! Meanwhile, good-bye. (Whistles.) Good-bye. (He leaves.)

Anna.—Grandfather, tell me something.

Luka.—(Going to her.) All right; what is it, dear?

(Klesch, after looking all around, goes toward his wife and makes signs to her as if he wished to tell her something.)

Luka.—What do you want, brother?

Klesch.—(In a low voice.) Nothing. (He goes slowly toward the entrance door, remains there a few seconds in silence, then goes out.)

Luka.—(After watching Klesch.) Tormented by your husband?

Anna.—I don't think about him any more.

Luka.—Did he beat you?

Anna.—Oh, how much! He's the cause of my——

Bubnov.—My wife had a lover—— My, how that rascal could play checkers!

Medvedev.—Ahem!

Anna.—Grandfather, talk to me, please. I'm so tired—perplexed.

Luka.—Don't worry; it's nothing but death coming on—and that's nothing, dear. Hope! When you're dead, then you'll be tranquil. You will no longer need anything nor fear any one. Calm, tranquillity and rest will be yours. Death alleviates. Death, we are told, is rest; and that is true, my dear, for where on earth can rest be found?

Pepel enters, somewhat intoxicated. He sits on a bunk near the entry door, sad and silent.

Anna.—And over yonder, as here, is there suffering also?

Luka.—None, my dear; none, I tell you. Have faith—rest and nothing else. They will lead you before the Lord and say: "Lord God, here is your servant, Anna——"

Medvedev.—(Severely.) How do you know what they'll say up there?

(Pepel raises his head and listens at the sound of Medvedev's voice.)

Luka.—Evidently because I do know, corporal.

Medvedev.—(Conciliatory.) Well—of course—after all, it's your affair—although I'm not really corporal yet.

Bubnov.—I jump two.

Medvedev.—Oh, the rascal!

Luka.—Then the Lord God will look at you with tender, pitying eyes, and say: "I know this Anna; take her to paradise, that she may rest—I know that her life has been hard—that she is very tired—let her rest."

Anna.—(Breathing with difficulty.) Grandfather — ah, you're good! Oh, if it were like that! Not to feel anything—to rest——

Luka.—You'll feel nothing—nothing. Have faith! Die without fear—with joy. Death to us, I tell you, is like a mother to her little child.

Anna.—But—perhaps—I may—get well.

Luka.—(Smiling.) What for? To suffer more?

Anna.—But still—to live—just a little—while. If—over yonder—there is—no suffering—I can be—patient here—a little longer.

Luka.—Rest, and simply nothing else.

Pepel.—(Rising.) That may be true, and then again it may not be true.

Anna.—(Frightened.) O God!

Luka.—Oh, it's you, is it, charming youth!

Medvedev.—Who's making all that noise?

Pepel.—(Advancing toward Medvedev.) I am. What of it?

Medvedev.—Well, because you're noisy without any reason. A man ought to conduct himself properly.

Pepel.—Brute! and he calls himself an uncle, too. Ha! ha!

Luka.—(To Pepel, in a low voice.) See here, don't yell so. This woman is dying—her lips are already discolored—don't disturb her.

Pepel.—I won't, for your sake, grandfather. You're a good fellow! You lie so beautifully—tell such agreeable fairy tales—that's good!—there are so few agreeable things on this earth.

Bubnov.—Is the woman really dying?

Luka.—She don't seem to be joking about it.

Bubnov.—Then she'll stop coughing—she coughs too much—I take two.

Medvedev.—Devil take you!

Pepel.—Abram.

Medvedev.—I'm not Abram for you.

Pepel.—Abramo, is Natasha sick?

Medvedev.—That's none of your business.

Pepel.—No; but tell me, did Vasilisa beat her badly?

Medvedev.—That's none of your business, either. It's a family affair. And what are you to us?

Pepel.—Whatever I am, if I wished, you would never see Natasha again.

Medvedev.—(Stopping his play.) What did you say? Who are you talking to? My niece?—with you? Oh, you thief!

Pepel.—Thief, if you like; but not yet caught by you, understand!

Medvedev.—Just wait! I'll catch you, all right—before long, too.

Pepel.—Well, if you do take me, woe betide your nest here! Do you think I'd keep still before the judges? Better count on a wolf being amiable! They'd ask me: "Who incited you to steal? Who showed you where?" "Mikhail Kostylev and his wife," I should answer. "Who bought the stolen objects?" "Mikhail Kostylev and his wife."

Medvedev.—No one would believe you.

Pepel.—Yes, they would believe me, too; because it's the truth, and I'd get you into it, also—ha! I'd ruin you all, devils that you are! You'd see!

Medvedev.—(Troubled.) You lie! You know you're lying! And, besides, what harm have I done you, mad dog?

Pepel.—What good have you done me?

Luka.—Bravo, bravo!

Medvedev.—(To Luka.) What are you croaking about? Any of your business, is it? This is a family affair.

Bubnov.—(To Luka.) Drop it! It's not for us the noose is being prepared.

Luka.—(Humbly.) I'm not interfering. I'm saying simply that he that does no good to his fellow-man does ill.

Medvedev.—(Who failed to understand.) That's it! Here we all know each other—but who are you? (He leaves.)

Luka.—The officer got hot, didn't he? Oh, my brothers, I see that affairs here are very much mixed up.

Pepel.—He has gone to complain to Vasilisa.

Bubnov.—You act like a fool, Vaska! Don't you know that fool-hardiness is in season only when we go into the forest to gather mushrooms? It's of no account here—they'll promptly twist your neck.

Pepel.—Pshaw! We fellows of Yaroslav are not taken so easily, even if our hands are empty; we know how to defend ourselves.

Luka.—Nevertheless, my son, you would do better to go away.

Pepel.—Go away? Where? Tell me.

Luka.—To Siberia.

Pepel.—Oh, no! I prefer to wait till I'm sent there at the expense of the government.

Luka.—No, go now, I tell you. There you can make your way. They need just such fellows as you are.

Pepel.—My way has been decided once for all. My father spent practically all his life in prisons—I inherited the way—from a little boy up I have been called thief, son of a thief——

Luka.—What a beautiful land, Siberia! A land of gold! There he that has strength and brains is like a cucumber under glass.

Pepel.—Say, old man, what are you always lying for?

Luka.—What?

Pepel.—Are you deaf? I asked why you're always lying.

Luka.—What do you think I'm lying about?

Pepel.—About everything! According to what you say, we'll be well off here, better off there—all lies! But why do you tell them?

Luka.—Well, you'd better believe me, and then go see for yourself—you'll thank me—why suffer here? Besides, what

need have you to hear truth? Come, reflect a moment! Truth, perhaps, would prove to be but a club for you.

Pepel.—So much the worse! Nevertheless, hurrah for the club!

Luka.—But, you foolish fellow, why bring unhappiness down upon your own head?

Bubnov.—What rigmarole are you fellows getting over? I don't seem to catch on. What truth have you any need for, Vaska? What would you do with it? You know the truth about yourself—we all do.

Pepel.—Oh, listen! Don't chime in; let him talk. Tell me, old man, does God exist? (Luka smiles and is silent.)

Bubnov.—Men exist—like chips of wood that float on the river——

Pepel.—Come, tell me, is there a God?

Luka.—(In a low voice.) If you believe, there is; if you don't believe, there isn't. Everything in which we believe exists——

Pepel.—(Looks at the old man in silent astonishment.)

Bubnov.—Well, Pepel, I'm going out to drink my tea. Coming?

Luka.—(To Pepel.) Why do you look at me that way?

Pepel.—You mean—that——

Vasilisa.—(Meets Bubnov going out as she is coming in.) Is Nastya in?

Bubnov.—No. (He leaves.)

Pepel.—Ah, you here!

Vasilisa.—(Going toward Anna's bed.) She's still alive?

Luka.—Don't disturb her.

Vasilisa.—And what're you doing here?

Luka.—I can go away, if you like.

Vasilisa.—(Going toward Pepel's room.) Vaska, I want to talk to you.

(Luka goes to the entry door, opens and closes it with a bang. Then tip-toes back, climbs upon a bunk, and from there gets on top of the stove.)

Vasilisa.—(Calling from Pepel's room.) Vaska, come here.

Pepel.—I don't want to.

Vasilisa.—What's the matter? Are you mad?

Pepel.—Oh, I'm tired of all this——

Vasilisa.—Tired of me, too?

Pepel.—Yes, tired of you, too. (Vasilisa draws her fichu more tightly across her breast. Then peeps cautiously within the curtains of Anna's bed and returns to Pepel.) Well, speak out.

Vasilisa.—What can I say? It's not my nature to beg for love. Thanks for the truth.

Pepel.—What truth?

Vasilisa.—Why, that you're tired of me. Isn't it true?

Pepel.—(Looks at her in silence.)

Vasilisa.—(Going near him.) Why do you look at me that way?

Pepel.—(With a sigh.) How beautiful you are, Vasilisa! (She puts her hand on his neck, but he draws away.) Yet I never loved you. We've been intimate, it's true, but I was never pleased——

Vasilisa.—(In a low voice.) Well—then——

Pepel.—Then nothing more need be said on the subject. Go away.

Vasilisa.—You've got your eye on another?

Pepel.—That's none of your business. If I did have my eye on another, I wouldn't call on you to make the match.

Vasilisa.—(Significantly.) Why not? Perhaps I might be a great help to you.

Pepel.—(Suspiciously.) In what way?

Vasilisa.—You know well enough—why pretend not to? Vaska, I'm frank. (In a still lower voice.) I shall not try to conceal that you've offended me. Without rhyme or reason you've stung me as with a whip. You've been saying you loved me, and now all of a sudden——

Pepel.—Not all of a sudden—for a long time. The trouble is, you're heartless; and a woman needs a heart. You see, we

men are wild beasts and must be tamed. Now, what have you done to tame me?

Vasilisa.—What has been, has been—I know man isn't master of his feelings. Since you no longer love me—well—so be it.

Pepel.—Then, that's enough! Let's separate quietly, without any fuss.

Vasilisa.—Here, wait a moment! While with you, I had hoped that some day you would help me to get out of this muck; that you would rid me of my husband—of my uncle—of all this cursed existence. And, perhaps, after all, Vaska, it was not really you that I loved, but this hope in you, this dream. Understand, I was waiting for you to pull me——

Pepel.—You're not a nail nor am I pincers! And I, also, had hoped that you, so intelligent, so clever—for you are intelligent and——

Vasilisa.—(Leaning toward him.) Vaska, come, now, suppose we were to help each other——

Pepel.—How?

Vasilisa.—(Low, but forcibly.) My sister—pleases you—I know it.

Pepel.—And so you beat her cruelly! Take care how you touch her!

Vasilisa.—Wait; don't get mad! Everything can be arranged decently. Would you like to marry her? I'll give you money, besides—three hundred rubles. Even more, when I can get them together.

Pepel.—(Drawing away.) A moment! How so? What for?

Vasilisa.—Rid me—of my husband. Unloosen this yoke of misery from my neck.

Pepel.—Ah! that's it, is it? Prettily schemed, that, very! The husband put to bed with a shovel, the lover in Siberia, and you——

Vasilisa.—Not so fast, Vaska! Why in Siberia? You needn't do it yourself; you've companions. And even if you did—who'd know it? Just think—Natasha and the money! You could go away somewhere—it wouldn't make my sister

mad to leave me. I can't bear the sight of her. I beat her so that I cry to think of it—and then I beat her again, and shall continue to beat her.

Pepel.—You ferocious beast! And you boast of it, too!

Vasilisa.—I don't boast, simply tell the truth. Just think, Vaska, you've been in prison twice already on account of my husband and his rapacity. He has fastened himself on me like a leech, and for four years, now, has sucked my life's blood. He ill-treats Natasha, too—calls her a beggar and worse. In short, he's a pest to all of us.

Pepel.—You scheme too well!

Vasilisa.—My words are very clear; no one but a fool could fail to understand what I mean.

(Kostylev opens the door cautiously, and quietly advances.)

Pepel.—(To Vasilisa.) Very well! Go away.

Vasilisa.—Think over it. (Seeing her husband.) Ah, it's you, is it? Were you looking for me?

(Pepel straightens up and looks at Kostylev startled.)

Kostylev.—Yes. And you two are here alone! Talking, eh? (Stamps his foot and shouts.) Vasilisa! Strumpet! Beggar! (He seems to be frightened at his own words.) O God, pardon me! You've made me sin again, Vasilisa. I've been looking for you everywhere. (He trembles.) It's time for us to go to bed. Again you've forgotten to fill the lamp. Beggar! Hussy! (He threatens her with trembling hands. Vasilisa walks toward the door, gazing at Pepel significantly.)

Pepel.—(To Kostylev.) Come, now, pack off! Pack off!

Kostylev.—(Loudly.) I'm master here! Pack off yourself, thief!

Pepel.—(In a hollow voice.) Get out, Mikhail!

Kostylev.—You dare! I'm the—I'll——

(Pepel seizes Kostylev by the neck and shakes him. A noise is heard on the stove, and a prolonged yawn. Pepel lets go of Kostylev, who runs off into the entry shouting.)

Pepel.—(Climbing on a bunk.) Who's there? Who's on the stove?

Luka.—(Showing his head.) Beg pardon——

Pepel.—You!

Luka.—(Calmly.) Why, yes—oh, Lord!

Pepel.—(Closes the entry door and feels for the bolt, which he cannot find, to fasten the door.) Oh, devils! Come down, old man. (Brutally.) Why did you get up there?

Luka.—Where should I go?

Pepel.—But you went into the entry.

Luka.—Oh, the entry is too cold for an old man.

Pepel.—And you—heard?

Luka.—Why, certainly. I'm not deaf. Akh, my good fellow, how fortunate you are! how fortunate!

Pepel.—(Suspiciously.) Fortunate? Why?

Luka.—That I happened to be upon the stove.

Pepel.—And why did you happen, just now only, to make a noise?

Luka.—Well, I suppose on account of the heat—and your fortune. And then, too, I thought, What if this fellow should allow himself to be deceived, and kill the husband?

Pepel.—Yes, that might have happened. How I hate him!

Luka.—Yes, such things happen. Many are deceived that way.

Pepel.—(Smiling.) Perhaps you were deceived some time yourself.

Luka.—Now, listen, young man, to what I have to tell you. Fly from that woman. She will rid herself of her husband more cleverly than you can. Don't permit yourself to be deceived by her. Look! am I bald? Know why? Because of women. I have known more, perhaps, than I ever had hairs on my head; but this Vasilisa surpasses them all in villainy.

Pepel.—I don't know whether I ought to thank you, or if you, too——

Luka.—Say nothing. If there be one here that pleases you, take her and fly—fly far away.

Pepel.—(Sadly.) It is so difficult to judge people! Some are good and some are bad. I can't fathom them.

Luka.—What is there to fathom? Every man lives according to his heart—to-day good, to-morrow bad; and if this girl has won your heart, take her and fly. If not, go alone. You are young, and can easily find another at any time.

Pepel.—(Takes Luka by the shoulder.) No. Say, what is your object in telling me all this?

Luka.—Wait; let go! I want to look at Anna. It seemed just now that there was a little too much rattling in her throat. (He goes to Anna's bed, raises the curtain and touches her. Pepel watches him pensively.) Merciful Saviour! receive into thy arms thy servant Anna.

Pepel.—(In a low voice.) Is she dead?

Luka.—(In a low voice.) Her suffering is o'er. Where is her husband?

Pepel.—In a dram-shop, doubtless.

Luka.—We must inform him.

Pepel.—(Trembling.) I don't love the dead.

Luka.—Why should you love them? We must love the living. (They leave.)

(A moment or two of perfect quiet; then unsteady footsteps and muttering are heard coming from the entry.)

The Actor.—(Staggers in, shouting.) Say, old man, where are you? I recollect them now. Listen! (Staggers forward a few steps, strikes an attitude and tries to recite some lines. Natasha appears in the doorway.)

Natasha.—(Laughing.) Clown! You're full.

The Actor.—(Turning toward her.) Ah, 'tis you! And where is the old man—that dear old man? There don't seem to be any one here. Good-bye, Natasha. Good-bye, Natasha.

Natasha.—(Entering.) You haven't said good-day yet, and now you're saying good-bye.

The Actor.—(Barring her passage.) I'm going—going to leave, too. The spring will come, but I shall not be here.

Natasha.—Let me alone! Where are you going?

The Actor.—To hunt up that city and cure myself. You leave, too. "Ophelia, get thee to a nunnery"—understand? There is a hospital for the organisms, for the drunkards. A splendid hospital—a marble pavement—light—cleanliness—nourishment—all for nothing! Yes, a marble pavement! I shall find it and be cured, and be a new man. Natasha, in the theatre my name is Sverchekov-Zhavolzhsky. No one knows it here—no one. Here I haven't any name. Can you conceive of that dishonor—to lose your name—when even the dogs on the street have names?

(Natasha, moving cautiously away from the Actor, goes to Anna's bed and looks in.)

The Actor.—Without names we're not men

Natasha.—Look! look! She's dead!

The Actor.—(Shaking his head.) It isn't possible——

Natasha.—(Drawing back.) But look! look!

Bubnov.—(In the doorway.) Look at what?

Natasha.—At Anna—she's dead.

Bubnov.—Which means that she won't cough any more. (He goes to Anna's bed, looks at the corpse a moment, then turns to his own bunk.) We must tell Klesch; this is his affair.

The Actor.—I'll go and tell him—that she has lost her name. (Leaves.)

Natasha.—(In the middle of the room.) Some day—I, too, shall—in a cellar—abandoned——

Bubnov.—(Arranging the ragged coverings of his bunk.) What's that?

Natasha.—Nothing—just talking to myself.

Bubnov.—Waiting for Vaska, eh? Some day he'll split your head open—your Vaska.

Natasha.—Well, after all, it matters little who does it. May as well be him as another.

Bubnov.—(Getting into his bunk.) Well, it's your business——

Natasha.—She's better off dead, of course; but it's pitiful, just the same. O God! why did she live at all?

Bubnov.—It's just the same with everybody. We're born, we live, we die. I shall die, also—and you, too. No use wasting any pity over it.

Enter Luka, the Tartar, Zhob Krivoy and Klesch, who, plainly bored, walks slowly behind the others.

Natasha.—Sh-h-h! Sh-h-h! Anna——

Zhob.—We've heard. Peace be with her, now that she's dead!

The Tartar.—(To Klesch.) We must carry her out—take her into the entry. Can't leave the dead here—this is where the living sleep.

Klesch.—(In a low voice.) We'll carry her out.

(They all go to the bed. Klesch looks at his wife over the shoulders of the others.)

Zhob.—(To the Tartar.) You're afraid she'll smell? Well, she won't—she dried all up while living.

Natasha.—My God! Not one word of pity—not one!

Luka.—What could you expect, my daughter? How can we pity the dead, when we have no pity for the living—when we have no pity for ourselves?

Bubnov.—(Yawning.) And the dead don't mind words, either. The sick, yes; the dead, no.

The Tartar.—(Going to his bunk.) You must notify the police.

Zhob.—Yes, that's obligatory. Klesch, have you notified the police?

Klesch.—No. She's got to be buried, and I have only forty kopecks.

Zhob.—Borrow—and we'll take up a collection, too; some can give five kopecks, some more. But above everything else, notify the police; if you don't, they'll think you killed her.

(He goes to his bunk.)

Natasha.—Well—now I'll dream about her; I always dream of the dead. It's so dark in the entry that I'm afraid to go alone.

Luka.—Fear rather the living.

Natasha.—Come with me, grandfather.

(She and Luka leave. A pause.)

Zhob.—Ah! Hassan, the spring will soon be here. It'll be warmer, more comfortable to live, then. Already the peasants must be getting their plows ready—getting ready to work—while we—— Hassan! He's snoring already, the cussed Mohammedan!

Klesch.—(Stupidly looking round.) What ought I to do now?

Zhob.—Why, go to bed and sleep—that's all.

Klesch.—And her—what—— (No one answers.)

Enter Satin and the Actor.

The Actor.—(Shouting.) Old man! Come hither, my faithful Kent!

Satin.—Miklukha-Maklai, the celebrated explorer has arrived. Hey, hey!

The Actor.—It is definitely decided. Where's the city? Where's the old man?

Satin.—Fata Morgana! The old man lied. There's nothing! No city! No hospital, nothing!

The Actor.—You lie!

The Tartar.—(Suddenly rising in his bunk.) Where's the landlord? I'm going after the landlord. It's impossible to sleep here. I want my money back. Dead people and drunkards! (He goes out hastily. Satin whistles.)

Bubnov.—(In a sleepy voice.) Go to bed; that's good fellows. Don't make a noise—the night's to sleep.

The Actor.—Oh, yes—there's some one dead here——

Satin.—(Shouts.) The dead don't hear—they can't understand. Shout, howl as much as you like—the dead won't hear!

(Luka appears in the doorway.)

ACT III.

A court-yard with rubbish scattered about. In the rear a high brick wall which shuts out the sky. On the right the high,

blank, discolored side of a frame stable. On the left the stone wall of the building in which is Kostylev's night-lodging house. Between this building and the rear wall a narrow passageway. In the stone wall are two windows, one level with the ground, the other two metres above. The beginning of spring, about sunset. Natasha and Nastya are sitting side by side on a log. Luka and the Baron are on a sled. Klesch is stretched out on a pile of wood near the stable. Bubnov's face can be seen in the cellar window.

Nastya.—(With closed eyes, accentuating her words with her head.) Then at night he came into the garden, into the pavilion, as had been agreed upon between us. I had already been waiting for him a long while, and was trembling from fear and chagrin. He was trembling also, and was white as chalk. He had a revolver in his hand——

Natasha.—(Eating seeds.) There, you see! That proves how true it is that students are rattle-brained fellows.

Nastya.—And then he said to me, in a terrible voice, "My dearest love——"

Bubnov.—Ho, ho! Dearest love!

Baron.—Oh, let up! If it doesn't please you, don't listen; but don't annoy those who want to lie. And then?

Nastya.—He said: "My dearest love, my parents won't give their consent to our marriage. They even threaten to curse me because of my love for you; hence I must," he said, "put an end to my sad existence." And his revolver was immense—loaded with ten bullets. "Good-bye," he said; "my decision is irrevocable. I cannot live without you." And then I answered: "My never-to-be-forgotten friend Raoul——"

Bubnov.—(Surprised.) What's that? Raoul?

Baron.—(Laughing.) Come, come, Nastya! The last time it was Gaston.

Nastya.—(Jumping up.) Shut up, wretches! You vagabond dogs! Can you understand love—true love? I have felt true love. (To the Baron.) And you, you miserable wretch! An educated man who claims to have taken his coffee in bed!

Luka.—There, there! Don't insult each other. Respect the human being. The important thing is not what is said, but why it's said. Continue your story, my daughter.

Bubnov.—Spread out your peacock plumes, jay.

Baron.—Yes, yes, go on. And then?

Natasha.—Pay no attention to them; it's envy; because they've nothing worth telling in their lives——

Nastya.—(Sitting down.) No, I don't want to. I'll tell no more, because they don't believe—they laugh—— (Suddenly she stops, and then, after a short pause, closes her eyes and continues her story, accentuating the words with her hands, as if she heard far-away music.) And then I answered: "Joy of my life, star of my nights, I cannot live without you, either, because I love you and shall continue to love you as long as my heart beats in my breast. But," I said, "don't throw your life away; preserve it for the sake of your parents, whose only joy you are. Leave me; better that my life should be thrown away through love for you; for, after all, what does it matter, since I am good for nothing—good for nothing?"

(She covers her face with her hands and cries bitterly.)

Natasha.—Don't cry. Don't cry. No use to cry.

(Luka, smiling, gently strokes Nastya's hair.)

Bubnov.—(Laughing.) Oh, you daughter of the devil!

Baron.—(Laughing also.) Say, grandfather, perhaps you think that all happened? Why, every word came out of that old novel "The Fatal Love." Bosh! Every word of it bosh!

Natasha.—Well, what's that to you? Shut up! You've fallen so low that you no longer count.

Nastya.—(Furious.) You infernal wretch! Have you no soul?

Luka.—(Taking her by the arm.) There, there! Let's leave them, my daughter. Don't get angry—I know—I believe. Truth is yours, not theirs. If you believe that you have truly loved, then you have truly loved. Yes, you have truly loved. And don't get angry at him, your bedfellow—perhaps it's jealousy that makes him laugh—perhaps he has had nothing real in all his life. Come, let's go.

Nastya.—(Placing her hand over her heart.) Grandfather, I swear it happened—I swear. It was a student—a Frenchman named Gaston—with a black cap and patent-leather shoes. Oh, may thunder strike me if it's not true! And oh, he loved me! how he loved me!

Luka.—I understand. I believe it. With patent-leather shoes, you said? Well, well! And did you love him so very much, too? (He and Nastya leave.)

Baron.—What a silly thing, that girl! Good-hearted, but silly!

Bubnov.—Why are human beings so fond of lying—lying just as if they were being questioned in court?

Natasha.—Evidently because lies are more agreeable than truth. I also——

Baron.—Well, what do you do also?

Natasha.—I invent also—and expect——

Baron.—What?

Natasha.—(Confused, but smiling.) I don't really know. I say to myself, to-morrow some one will come, some one worth coming; or something will happen, something worth happening. I've been expecting for ever so long, but in reality —what could I expect? (A pause.)

Baron.—(Smiling.) There's nothing to expect, and I expect nothing. For me, everything has happened—it's over and done for. Let others expect!

Natasha.—Well, now I imagine that to-morrow I shall die suddenly—and my blood freezes in my veins. It's well in summer to imagine death — when there are heavy thunder storms, you may be killed suddenly.

Baron.—I see that you haven't led a happy life. Of course, on account of your sister, with her devilish disposition——

Natasha.—And whose life is happy? Every one suffers; it's easily seen that no one——

Klesch.—(Who until this moment has been lying quietly, rises suddenly.) No one, you say? That's a lie! If no one lived happily, we could be more patient—our life would be more tolerable.

Bubnov.—What's the matter with you? What makes you howl?

(Klesch lies down on the planks again, growling.)

Baron.—I must go and make up with Nastya—if not, she won't give me any money to buy vodka.

Bubnov.—It's really curious how people love to lie. Of course, in Nastya's case it's easily understood; she's accustomed to paint and powder; she smears them on her face, and naturally she likes to smear them on her life as well; but why the others? Why, for instance, does Luka lie so much—and without any benefit to himself? An old man, too; why does he do it?

Baron.—(Laughing.) All lives are dull and gray, so every one likes to use a little rouge.

Luka.—(Entering.) Why do you torment that poor girl so much, Baron? Let her cry, since it amuses her. She cries purely for pleasure. What does it matter to you?

Baron.—But it's so stupid. She makes me tired. One day it's Raoul, the next Gaston, and so over and over again. However, I'm going to make up. (Leaves.)

Luka.—Caress her. It's always well to cherish any human being.

Natasha.—Oh, but you're good, grandfather! Why are you so kind?

Luka.—Kind, did you say? Well, if you think so—— (There is heard, coming from behind the brick wall, a song with an accordion accompaniment.) Some one, my dear, must needs be kind—have a little pity for others. Christ pitied every one, and commanded us to do likewise. And it is well, I assure you, to do so in time. For instance, once I had charge of the country house of an engineer at Tomsk. The house was in the woods—a lonely spot—and in winter I was entirely alone, but very comfortable. Now, one time I heard some one breaking in.

Natasha.—Robbers?

Luka.—Yes. I took my gun and went out. Two men were trying to force a window, and so occupied with their task that they failed to notice me. I shouted, "Begone! March!" They

would have attacked me with an axe, but I was too quick, threatening first one and then the other with my gun. They fell upon their knees, begging mercy. But I was very angry, on account of the axe, you know. "Devils!" I shouted, "when I wished to drive you away, you were not willing to go; now I want one of you to get some good, stout switches." Then I made each in turn give the other a sound thrashing. When they had finished, they said: "For God's sake, grandfather, give us a piece of bread! We've had nothing to eat." That's why they were robbing, my dear. (He laughs.) Really, they were two excellent rascals. Then I asked, "Why didn't you say so at once?" "Because we're tired of begging and begging," they replied, "and never receiving anything." They remained with me all winter. One, Stepan by name, took my gun and hunted in the forest; the other, Yakov, was sick all the time—did nothing but cough. When spring came they said good-bye and travelled off into Russia.

Natasha.—They were escaped convicts—felons?

Luka.—Yes, that's what they were—kind-hearted muzhiks; and who knows, had I not shown them pity, perhaps they would have murdered me. And then 'twould have been court-room, prison and again Siberia! To what end? Neither the prisons nor Siberia teach us to be good; but man may, man may. (A pause.)

Bubnov.—I don't understand lying! Then what's the use? Tell me the truth—truth as it really is.

Klesch.—(Jumps up as if he had been touched with fire, and shouts.) Truth? what truth? where is truth to be found? (He shakes his rags about him.) Here's truth: no work, no strength! Here's truth: I've not even a hole to crawl into; I've nothing left but to die. Here's truth! The devil! What good is truth to me? Give me a chance to breathe! What am I guilty of? Why favor me with truth? Life is impossible! Here's truth for you!

Bubnov.—How fiery he is!

Luka.—Heavenly Father! See here, my son. You——

Klesch.—(Trembling with passion.) You're talking of truth; and you, old man, are always consoling everybody.

Well, I'll tell you the truth. I hate you all! Damn truth! understand? damn it! (He runs away.)

Luka.—The poor man! How excited he is! Where is he going?

Natasha.—He acts like a crazy man.

Bubnov.—He got it off well, didn't he? He acted as if he was in a theatre. He gets that way sometimes. He hasn't got used to life yet.

Pepel.—(Entering.) Peace to all the company! Well, Luka, malicious old man, still telling fairy tales?

Luka.—Had you but heard the heart-rending cries of a man——

Pepel.—Do you mean Klesch? What's the matter with him? I met him just now, running like a madman——

Luka.—Perhaps you would run, also, if your heart were as full——

Pepel.—(Sitting down.) I don't like him—he's too ill-natured—too proud. (Mimicking Klesch.) "I'm a worker." Every one else he thinks beneath him. Work if you like, if it pleases you, but there's nothing to be proud of about it. And if a man is to be appreciated according to the work he does, then a horse is the better animal. The horse works and says nothing. Natasha, are your folks home?

Natasha.—They've gone to the cemetery, and from there they expect to go to vespers.

Pepel.—That's why you have a little leisure—something rare!

Luka.—(Thoughtfully, to Bubnov.) You were speaking of truth. Truth is not a remedy for all the ills of life, nor will it always restore health to the diseased spirit. For instance, I once knew a man who believed in a land of truth—a land of justice.

Bubnov.—In what?

Luka.—In a land of truth. "Somewhere," said he, "there must be a land inhabited by an exceptional race who respect and mutually aid one another—and with them all goes well." Now, this man was always getting ready to go in search of

that land. He was poor, lived badly; but even in his worst moments, when his strength was nearly at an end, he never lost courage. "'Tis nothing," he would say, with a smile; "it will pass. I shall be patient yet a little while, and then I shall abandon this dog's life and shall go into the land of truth." It was his single hope—his only joy.

Pepel.—Well, did he go?

Bubnov.—Where? Ha, ha, ha!

Luka.—And then one day there arrived—he was in Siberia—an exile, a man of great learning, with many books and charts. Then our man begged the savant to show him the land of truth and point out the way to it. The savant opened his books, unfolded his charts and searched and searched, but no land of truth could be found anywhere. There, mapped out, lay the whole earth; but the land of truth—nowhere.

Pepel.—(Low.) Well, then, there is none.

(Bubnov bursts out laughing.)

Natasha.—Wait! Well, grandfather?

Luka.—But our man wouldn't believe the savant, and said: "There must be one. Search more carefully! If not, what good are all your books and charts?" The savant, offended, exclaimed, "My books and charts are true; there is no land of truth." That made our man furious. "What!" he said, "I have lived and suffered in vain all this time! A belief in its existence has been my whole faith, and now, all of a sudden, you and your maps declare there is no such land! Stop, thief! Stop, thief! You a wise man? No, no—a scoundrel! a thief!" And then our man blacked the savant's eyes, and (a pause) went home and hung himself. (All are silent. Luka smilingly regards Pepel and Natasha.)

Pepel.—(In a low voice.) The devil! Your story is not merry!

Natasha.—He couldn't stand lies.

Bubnov.—Still fairy tales, every one of them!

Pepel.—And so no land of truth has been found——

Natasha.—'Twas sad for the poor fellow!

Bubnov.—Fairy tales! I tell you. Well, well, a land of truth! Ha, ha! (He disappears from the window.)

Luka.—(Nodding his head toward the window.) He laughs, poor fellow! (A pause.) Well, my children, I trust that you may live happily. I shall soon leave you.

Pepel.—Where are you going?

Luka.—To Little Russia. I understand that the Ukrainians have discovered a new religion—I want to look into it. Ah, man, man! Always searching—searching for something better! May God lend his aid!

Pepel.—Do you think he'll find it?

Luka.—Man? Certainly. He that seeks, finds. He that wills persistently, finds.

Natasha.—Ah, if man had but found something already! If he had but invented something!

Luka.—He'll find or invent, never fear! only it's necessary to help, my daughter.

Natasha.—How can I help? I, so helpless myself——

Pepel.—(Decisively.) Listen, Natasha; I wish to ask you once more—here, before him; he knows everything—to come with me.

Natasha.—Where? To prison?

Pepel.—I've already told you that I'll steal no more. On my word of honor, I'm done. I know how to read and write, and I'll work. He tells me that in Siberia one can do well. Shall we go? Do you think that I do not abhor this life? Akh! Natasha, I see—I know. It consoles me that others who steal more than I are honored—but it's not enough. While I don't repent, not believing in conscience, I feel a desire to live differently, to live better. A man ought to live in such a way that he can respect himself.

Luka.—Very true, my son. May God help you! True, indeed, a man ought to respect himself.

Pepel.—From childhood I have been a thief. I've always been called, by everybody, "Vaska the thief, Vaska the son of a thief," and so—well, here I am a thief! Comprehend clearly that I am a thief, probably through spite; that I am a thief because no one ever deemed it worth while to call me anything else. And you, Natasha, shall be the first to name me otherwise, if you will. Will you?

Natasha.—(Sadly.) To tell the truth—I no longer believe—in words. And to-day I'm anxious and depressed—as if some misfortune were about to happen. You have chosen a bad time to speak of this matter.

Pepel.—When shall I speak, then? This is not the first time——

Natasha.—Why should I go with you? For love? I don't love you very much. At times you please me; at others I don't even care to look at you. That seems to prove that I don't love you. True love is blind to the defects of the loved one—and I see——

Pepel.—You'll love me, never fear. You'll get used to me—just consent. 'Tis now more than a year since I began watching you. I saw that you were steady, serious—a girl to be depended upon—and I began to love you with all my heart.

(Vasilisa, in holiday attire, appears at the window and listens.)

Natasha.—Yes, you began to love me—and my sister?

Pepel.—(Confused.) Well—well—there are many like her.

Luka.—That doesn't matter, my daughter; if one cannot get thrushes, he eats blackbirds.

Pepel.—(Sadly.) Have pity on me! Such a life as mine is not worth living. I sink deeper and deeper in the mire, and struggle in vain, since everything that I have clutched at is rotten. You mentioned your sister. I did, indeed, think that she—wasn't—— If she hadn't been so hungry for money, I would have done anything for her—if she had only been satisfied with me alone. But no, she wanted other things—wanted money and freedom—freedom to live ill. She couldn't help me. But you, like a young pine tree, would prick, but support me.

Luka.—I also say, take him, my girl, take him; he's not a bad fellow; only be sure and recall to his mind as often as possible that he is good, in order that he may not forget it—and he'll believe you. Just say: "Vaska, you're good; now, don't forget it!" Think of what you may make of another, and of what may become of him, if you do not go! Your sister is a ferocious beast; of her husband we had better say noth-

ing. And then this life! While Vaska is strong and clever. Where will you go otherwise?

Natasha.—I've nowhere to go—I see—I know it. Only I have no confidence in any one. Truly, I don't know where to go.

Pepel.—There is but one other road open to you—but I shall not allow you to take it—I'll kill you first.

Natasha.—(Smiling.) Well, well, I'm not yet your wife, and already you want to kill me.

Pepel.—(Embracing her.) Oh, come now, Natasha!

Natasha.—(Embracing him.) All right. I've but one thing to say, Vaska, and I call upon God to witness my words: The first time you thrash me or injure me in any other way, I shall have no pity upon myself nor upon any one else. I shall either hang myself or——

Pepel.—May my arm wither if I touch you!

Luka.—Never fear, my daughter! He has more need of you than you of him.

Vasilisa.—(At the window.) Good, good! Kindly receive my congratulations upon the betrothal!

Natasha.—Oh, they've come back! Oh, Lord, they've seen us! Oh, Vaska!

Pepel.—What are you afraid of? No one will dare touch you now.

Vasilisa.—Don't be afraid, Natasha. He won't trounce you. He knows neither how to trounce nor how to love—I know something about it.

Luka.—(Low.) Akh! what a viper, that woman!

Vasilisa.—He's brave—in words.

Kostylev.—(Entering.) Natasha, what the mischief are yo doing here, lazybones? Complaining about your relatives? And the samovar isn't ready, nor even the table cleared.

Natasha.—(Walking away.) But you intended going to church——

Kostylev.—It's none of your business what we intended to do! You must do what we order you to!

Pepel.—Stop! She isn't your servant any longer. Natasha, don't go—don't do anything.

Natasha.—(To Pepel.) Don't you order me about—it's a little too soon yet. (Leaves.)

Pepel.—(To Kostylev.) That will do! You've mistreated her quite enough! She's mine, now.

Kostylev.—Yours? When did you buy her? How much did you pay? (Vasilisa bursts out laughing.)

Luka.—Vaska, you'd better leave.

Pepel.—Look out, you laughers! Look out you don't end in tears!

Vasilisa.—Akh, akh! 'Tis frightful! I'm so afraid!

Luka.—Go away, Vaska; don't you see that she is trying simply to provoke you?

Pepel.—Oh, yes—but she deceives herself. (To Vasilisa.) It shall not be as you wish——

Vasilisa.—Nor shall it be as I do not wish, Vaska.

Pepel.—(Shaking his fist at her.) We'll see! (He leaves.)

Vasilisa.—(Leaving the window.) I'll make preparations for the wedding!

Kostylev.—So—you're leaving, I understand, old man?

Luka.—It's time.

Kostylev.—Where are you going?

Luka.—Where my eyes lead me.

Kostylev.—To tramp, eh? Don't suit you, then, to stay in one place?

Luka.—Water under a fixed stone don't run, they say.

Kostylev.—A stone, yes—but a man ought to be fixed—settled somewhere. People can't be allowed to live like cockroaches—to run about wherever it pleases them. A man ought to settle down, and not tramp the highways.

Luka.—But if a man feels at home everywhere?

Kostylev.—Then he's a vagabond—a useless fellow. A man must be useful—must work.

Luka.—Really?

Kostylev.—Why, yes—and if not, what? What is a pilgrim? A man unlike others. If he's learned something new—something useless—some truth, perhaps; for, look here, it's not good to tell all truths—yes, let him keep it to himself—let him keep his mouth shut—or else speak in such a way that no one will understand him. He ought to want nothing and disturb no one. It doesn't matter to him how people live; his duty is to live a righteous life in the woods or in a cave, invisible to everybody — without disturbing any one, without judging any one, but praying for all—for all the sins in the world—for yours, for mine, for everybody's. That's what he flees from the vanities of this world for—to pray. (A pause.) And you—what kind of a pilgrim are you? No passport! Every honest man has to have a passport—every one.

Luka.—There are men and men——

Kostylev.—Don't try to be smart! Don't try to spring any conundrums on me. I'm no more stupid than you are. What do you mean by men and men?

Luka.—No conundrum about it. I say there are sterile fields, and fertile ones where all that is sown sprouts. That's what I say.

Kostylev.—But why do you say it?

Luka.—Now, take your own case for example. Suppose that God himself said to you, "Mikhail Ivanovitch, be a man!" Do you think you'd change? Such as you are you'd remain.

Kostylev.—Akh! Don't you know that my wife's uncle is a policeman, and that if I wished——

Vasilisa.—(Entering.) Mikhail, come get your tea.

Kostylev.—(To Luka.) And this is what I've got to say to you: Get out of this house!

Vasilisa.—Yes, old man, get out! Your tongue is too long! And then, who knows? perhaps you are an escaped convict.

Kostylev.—See that you march yourself off this very day. If not, take care!

Luka.—You'll call the uncle? Well, call him. How fortunate! Here's an escaped convict; arrest him, and the uncle will be rewarded—he'll get at least three kopecks!

Bubnov.—(In the window.) Who's that they're selling for three kopecks?

Luka.—Why, they want to sell me.

Vasilisa.—(To her husband.) Come.

Bubnov.—For three kopecks? Look out, old man, they'd sell you for one!

Kostylev.—(To Bubnov.) Where did you spring from, like the devil out of a box?

Vasilisa.—What a lot of riff-raff and mysterious persons there are in the world!

Luka.—Good appetite!

Vasilisa.—(Turning round.) Hold your tongue, rotten mushroom! (She and her husband leave.)

Luka.—I'm leaving to-night——

Bubnov.—That's the best thing you can do. It's well to leave in time. I know—I probably saved myself from hard labor in Siberia by leaving in time.

Luka.—Is that so?

Bubnov.—Yes; you see, my wife had been trolloping with my workman. The rascal was a good hand, I admit; he could dye cats and dogs into expensive furs in a way that was truly astonishing. Well, he and my wife got so intimate that I expected every day to be poisoned. Then I began to beat my wife, and in return he began to beat me, and he thumped mighty hard! One time he pulled half my beard out by the roots, and broke a rib; then I began to get mad myself, and so one day I cracked my wife's head with an iron bar! Oh, it was war! However, I saw there was nothing in it for me—that they had the upper hand; and so I made up my mind to do her up once for all. But, fortunately for me, I reflected in time, and skipped.

Luka.—That was the best thing to do.

Bubnov.—But the shop was in my wife's name, and I remained—what you see! But, to tell the truth, I should have lost the shop anyway, because, you see, I loved drink.

Luka.—Akh, that love for drink!

Bubnov.—When I begin to bend my elbow I would sell everything—even my skin. And then, I'm lazy—it's astonishing how I love not to work.

Enter Satin and the Actor, disputing.

Satin.—Bosh, bosh! You won't go anywhere. Say, old man, what silly cock-and-bull story have you been stuffing into this fellow's head?

The Actor.—You lie! Grandfather, tell him he lies. Yes, I shall go. I've worked to-day—sweeping the streets—and I haven't touched a drop, either. See, here's the thirty kopecks, and I'm sober.

Satin.—That's stupid—nothing else. Give them to me, and I'll drink them up, or play cards.

The Actor.—Hands off! This is for the trip.

Luka.—(To Satin.) Why do you try to drag him down?

Satin.—Tell me, sorcerer, favorite of the gods, what fate has life in reserve for me? I've lost much—but everything isn't lost, since there are cleverer tricksters than I in this world.

Luka.—You're merry!

Bubnov.—Hey, there! Actor, come here.

(The Actor goes to the window and talks in a low voice with Bubnov.)

Satin.—I was jolly when I was young. It's pleasant to remember. I danced well and played in the theatre. I loved to make folks laugh. 'Twas a happy time!

Luka.—Then how came you here?

Satin.—How inquisitive you are, old man! You want to know everything. What for?

Luka.—I would fain comprehend the acts of men—and I don't comprehend you. You're gallant, not at all stupid, and yet——

Satin.—The prison, grandfather—I spent four years and seven months there; and after prison, all roads are barred.

Luka.—Akh! But why were you put there?

Satin.—On account of a good-for-nothing fellow. In an angry fit I killed him. I learned to play cards in prison.

Luka.—Why did you kill him? Some woman at the bottom of it?

Satin.—My own sister. But drop it! I don't like to be questioned. It happened long ago—and my sister is dead—nine years already. Ah, I had a fine little sister!

Luka.—Yet you're not huffed at life; whereas the locksmith—a while ago—how he howled, poor fellow!

Satin.—Who? Klesch?

Luka.—Yes, Klesch. "No work!" he howled, "nothing!"

Satin.—Oh, he'll get used to it. What shall I do with myself?

(Klesch comes in slowly, with bowed head.)

Satin.—Say, widower, what's the matter with you? What are you trying to concoct?

Klesch.—I'm thinking what I shall do. I've no tools; the funeral swallowed everything.

Satin.—Let me give you a pointer—just do nothing.

Klesch.—No use talking! I'd be ashamed to let people see me.

Satin.—Pshaw! Those very same people are not in the least ashamed to let you live worse than a dog. Now, look here. Suppose you stop working, and I, and hundreds of thousands of others—in fact, everybody—what would happen?

Klesch.—We'd all starve to death.

Luka.—(To Satin.) You ought to address that sort of talk to the "Rovers"—for there's a sect by that name——

Satin.—I know it; they're idiots, nevertheless, grandfather.

(Natasha's cries are heard coming from Kostylev's window.)

Natasha.—What are you beating me for?

Luka.—(Uneasily.) That's Natasha's voice. Are they——

(There is a noise of breaking crockery, and then Kostylev's sharp voice is heard.)

Kostylev.—Heretic! Strumpet!

Vasilisa.—(Behind the scenes.) Wait, wait! I'm coming! I'll——

Natasha.—(Behind the scenes.) Help, help! They're killing me!

Satin.—(Shouting in the window.) Hey, there, you!

Luka.—(Excitedly.) Vaska must be called. My God! Hurry!

The Actor.—(Running out.) I'll go, I'll go!

Bubnov.—They're trouncing her a little too often, now!

Satin.—Come, old man, we'll be witnesses.

Luka.—(Following Satin.) I'd be a poor witness. Better call Vaska; quickly!

Natasha.—(Behind the scenes.) Sister, little sister! Go-o-o!

Bubnov.—They've gagged her! We must go and see.

(The noise gradually grows less and less. Evidently they have gone from the room into the entry. Then Kostylev is heard to shout.)

Kostylev.—Shut it!

(A door bangs. Perfect silence follows. It is now dusk. Klesch, meanwhile, has remained indifferent on the sled, rubbing his hands. He begins to mutter, indistinctly at first, then:)

Klesch.—But I've got to live—I've got to have a shelter somewhere, at least. And I've got nothing—I'm all alone, and I don't know where to go for help.

(He rises and goes off slowly, with head bowed down. On the stage some seconds of sinister silence. Then a gradually increasing noise, a chaos of sound is heard; finally individual voices can be distinguished.)

Vasilisa.—(Behind the scenes.) Well, she's my sister——

Kostylev.—(Behind the scenes.) What right have you to——

Vasilisa.—(Same place.) Jail-bird!

Satin.—(Same place.) Quick, call Vaska! Thump him, Zhob! (A policeman's whistle is heard.)

Zhob.—(Entering.) My, what a whack I gave him!

Medvedev.—(Running after Alushka.) Stop! give me that whistle!

Kostylev.—(Running in.) Abram, catch him! He has killed——

(Enter Kvasnya and Nastya, supporting Natasha. Satin comes in backward, warding off Vasilisa, who is trying to strike her sister. The Tartar, with his arm in a sling, a number of vagabonds, men and women in rags, follow.)

Satin.—(To Vasilisa.) Hold on there, you cursed hawk!

Vasilisa.—Clear out, you gallows bird! I'll tear her apart, if I die for it!

Kvasnya.—(Helping Natasha to one side.) There, now; that's enough, Vasilisa! Aren't you ashamed to make such a beast of yourself?

Medvedev.—(Seizing Satin.) Ah, I've caught you!

Satin.—Zhob, jump him! Vaska, Vaska!

(All except Natasha crowd round.)

Pepel.—(Arrives running, pushes the crowd aside.) Where's Natasha? where is she?

Kostylev.—(Seeking protection in a corner of the wall.) Abram, seize Vaska! Oh, my brethren, help us to arrest Vaska, the thief, the robber!

Pepel.—Akh, you old devil!

(He strikes Kostylev, who falls in such a position that the upper portion of his body is hidden by the corner of the wall. Pepel runs to Natasha.)

Vasilisa.—Beat him to a jelly, my friends! Beat the thief!

Medvedev.—(Shouting at Satin.) What business have you to mix yourself up in this affair? This is a family matter—between relatives. And what are you?

Pepel.—(To Natasha.) What did they strike you with? a knife?

Kvasnya.—The wild beasts! They scalded her feet!

Nastya.—They upset the samovar on her!

The Tartar.—Perhaps it was an accident. We mustn't accuse them unjustly

Natasha.—(Almost fainting.) Vaska—take me—hide me somewhere.

Vasilisa.—My God! Look, look! He's dead—they've killed him. (They crowd around Kostylev.)

Bubnov.—(Low.) Vaska, the old man's cooked——

Pepel.—(Looks without comprehending.) Run! Call! He must be taken to the hospital; I'll pay.

Bubnov.—I tell you the old man has broken his pipe.

(The noisy crowd is suddenly subdued, as a grate fire is quenched by water. Individuals in the crowd murmur: "Is it possible?" "A pretty business!" "Let's get out!" "The devil!" "Let's go before the police get here!" The crowd diminishes. Bubnov, the Tartar, Nastya and Kvasnya go to the corpse.)

Vasilisa.—(Rises and shouts triumphantly.) My husband has been murdered—and here's his murderer! I saw him do it, my friends, I saw him do it! Police! Police!

Pepel.—(Leaving Natasha.) Let me—— (To the crowd.) Back! (Looks first at the corpse, and then at Vasilisa.) Well, are you satisfied? (Touches the corpse with his foot.) He's done for, the old dog! It's happened as you wished. Wouldn't it be well for me to do you up the same way? (He starts after her, but Satin and Zhob seize and hold him. Vasilisa runs out.)

Satin.—Come, come! Return to your senses!

Zhob.—Stop her!

Vasilisa.—(Reappearing.) Well, Vaska, friend of my heart. No one can evade his fate. Whistle, Abram! Police!

Medvedev.—But they've stolen my whistle, these devils.

Alushka.—Say, here it is!

(He whistles. Medvedev pursues him.)

Satin.—Don't be afraid, Vaska; murder in a squabble is nothing. That don't cost much!

Vasilisa.—Hold him! He killed my husband; I saw him do it!

Satin.—But I also struck the old man at least three times. He didn't need much to finish him. Call me as a witness, Vaska.

Pepel.—I've no need to justify myself. I intend to inculpate Vasilisa, and I shall do so. She begged me to kill her husband—begged me to do it.

Natasha.—(Suddenly, in a loud voice.) Oh, now I understand! That's it, is it, Vaska? Pretty people! They're leagued together, he and my sister. They have an understanding. So that's it, is it, Vaska? You talked to me a while ago so she could overhear it, did you? Pretty people! She's his mistress, you know—everybody knows it. They're leagued together. She instigated him to kill her husband—he was in their way, and I, also—and so they crippled me.

Pepel.—What are you saying, Natasha? What are you saying?

Satin.—The devil!

Vasilisa.—You lie, both of you! He, Vaska, killed him.

Natasha.—They're leagued together, I tell you. May both be damned!

Satin.—A great game! Look out, Vaska, they'll cut off your wind!

The Tartar.—That beats me! A pretty mess!

Pepel.—Natasha, is it possible that you really mean it? Is it possible that you believe I am in league with her?

Satin.—Good God! Natasha, reflect a moment.

Vasilisa.—(Invisible, speaking in the passageway.) My husband has been murdered, your honor—Vaska Pepel, the thief, is the murderer—I saw him, Mr. Commissary—everybody saw him——

Natasha.—(Excitedly.) Pretty people! My sister and Vaska murdered him! Police, listen! It was my sister that urged him on—that bewitched her lover. And he, the cursed creature, killed him. Seize them both. Try them—and put me in prison, too! For the love of God, put me in prison, too!

ACT IV.

Scene.—Same as Act I. The partition forming Pepel's bedroom is no longer there, however, and Klesch's anvil and tools are gone, but Klesch himself is seated at the table repairing an accordion. The Tartar is stretched out in a corner, and groans occasionally. Satin, the Baron and Nastya are at the far end of the room, before them a bottle of vodka, three bottles of beer and a loaf of black bread. Upon the stove the Actor moves and coughs. It is night. The room is lighted by a lamp placed upon the table. The wind howls outside.

Klesch.—Yes, during the mix-up he disappeared.

Baron.—He has flown from the police like smoke from fire.

Satin.—Or like the sinner from the righteous.

Nastya.—What a good old man he was! Whereas you others, you're not men—you're mildew!

Baron.—(Drinking.) To your health, my lady!

Satin.—Yes, a curious old fellow. Here's Nastya fallen in love with him.

Nastya.—Yes, just so—I did love him. He had seen everything—he understood everything——

Satin.—(Laughing.) And, generally speaking, he was to most people like the soft part of bread to the toothless.

Baron.—(Laughing.) Or a poultice to an abscess.

Klesch.—He had pity—while the rest of you have none.

Satin.—What earthly use would it be to you if I did pity you?

Klesch.—You might—if you did not pity—at least not offend.

The Tartar.—(Sitting on his bunk and rocking his wounded arm as if it were a child.) He was a good old fellow! He had the law in his soul——

Baron.—What law, prince?

The Tartar.—Not to harm your fellow-man.

Klesch.—(Trying the accordion.) It's still whistling, damn it! The prince is right. We must live according to the law—the law of the gospel.

The Tartar.—Mohammed gave us the Koran, saying: "This is the law; let thy deeds be according to what is herein written." But the time will come when the Koran will not be sufficient; and the new time shall lay down the new law; for each time has its own law.

Satin.—Exactly so! The time has come, and has given us the Penal Code. That's a solid law, I tell you! You won't use that up very soon!

Nastya.—(Striking the table with her glass.) Why do I live here with such as you? I'm going to clear out—going somewhere, anywhere—to the end of the world.

Baron.—Without shoes, lady?

Nastya.—Stark naked—on all-fours.

Baron.—Stark naked—on all-fours? Well that would be picturesque, indeed! Especially that all-fours business.

Nastya.—Yes, I'd crawl, provided that by so doing I should never again see your miserable mug! Akh! how disgusting it is, this life—you—everything!

Satin.—Now, when you leave, be sure to take the Actor along. He's preparing to clear out, too. He's learned that barely half a kilometer from the end of the world there's a hospital for the organons——

The Actor.—(Showing his head over the stove.) Or-ganisms, you ass!

Satin.—For organons poisoned by alcohol.

The Actor.—Well, he'll go—you'll see.

Baron.—What "he," if you please, sir?

The Actor.—I.

Baron.—Thanks, servant of the goddess—what the mischief's her name? The goddess of the drama—of tragedy—what's her name?

The Actor.—Muse, you blockhead! Muse, not goddess.

Satin.—Lachesis—Atropos—Aphrodite—devil take you! It was the old man that swelled the Actor's head.

Baron.—A silly old fool!

The Actor.—Ignoramuses! Savages! Mel-po-me-ne! Heartless wretches! You'll see—he'll go—yes. He'll find his way to the place where there is no——

Baron.—No what, sir?

The Actor.—Nothing. (He declaims.) "This ditch shall be my tomb, I die feeble and decrepit." Why are you living? Why?

Baron.—Hey, there, "Kean," or "Genius and Dissolution!" Don't yell so.

The Actor.—Shut up! I shall yell.

Nastya.—(Raising her head and swinging her arms.) Yes, yell, so they'll understand you.

Baron.—Yell, apropos of what, my lady?

Satin.—Send them to the devil, Baron! Let them yell—split their heads open, if they want to—let them. Don't interfere with human beings, as the old man was accustomed to say. Yes, it was he, that old leaven, that has made our companions ferment.

Klesch.—He advised us to go to some beautiful, far-away place—but didn't show us how to get there.

Baron.—The old man is a charlatan!

Nastya.—You lie! You're the charlatan!

Baron.—Sh-h-h, sh-h-h, lady!

Klesch.—The old man didn't love truth—he expressed himself very strongly against it—and he was right. We can scarcely breathe, now. There's the prince. They crushed his arm working—and now it must be cut off. There's truth for you!

Satin.—(Pounding the table with his fist.) Silence! You're all beasts. It's not for the like of you to talk of that old man, blockheads! (More calmly.) Baron, you're worse than the rest; you understand nothing, and lie besides. The old man isn't a charlatan! What is truth? Man—that's truth; and that old man knows it, and you don't. I understood him. He did lie, it's true. He lied because he pitied you, devil take you! There are lots of people that lie because they pity their fellow-

men. I know it—I've read. They lie by inspiration—inspired by a desire to do good. There is the consoling lie—the conciliating lie—the lie that absolves the weight that has crushed the laborer's arm—the lie that indicts the starving. Oh, I know lies! The weak in spirit and those that subsist upon the blood of others need lies, and find them useful. They sustain the weak and cover the others; but he that is master of himself, that is independent, that is not filled with another's bread, has no need of lies. The lie is the religion of slaves and masters. Truth is the god of a free man!

Baron.—Bravo! Well said! I agree with you. You talk—like an honest man.

Satin.—And why shouldn't the trickster talk like an honest man, when honest men talk like tricksters? Yes, I've forgotten many things, but not all. The old man? He had a level head. He acted on me like acid on an old, dirty copper coin. Let's drink to his health!

(Nastya pours out a glass of beer and hands it to Satin.)

Satin.—(Smiling.) That old man thought for himself—lived the inner life. He looked at everything with his own eyes—the eyes of the spirit. One day I asked: "Grandfather, why do men live?" (Trying to imitate the voice and gestures of Luka.) "They live to make things better, comrade. For example, let us imagine a family of carpenters, where year after year not one is born out of the ordinary. But one day a carpenter is born, such a one as the world has never before seen. He stamps his personality upon the carpenter's art, and advances it twenty years at a stroke! Just so with all the others — shoemakers, locksmiths, all workmen, peasants and even the lords and masters themselves—all are living to better things. Each believes that he lives for himself, but he really lives for the betterment of humanity. People live, one generation succeeding another, perhaps for centuries, before the better man is born."

(Nastya gazes intently into Satin's face as he talks. Klesch stops work and listens. The Baron, with bowed head, drums lightly on the table with his fingers. The Actor leans forward on the stove to listen.)

Satin.—Every one, my comrades, upon this globe, without a single exception, lives in the hope of better things; that's the reason we should respect every man; for we know not who he is, why he is born, or what he may do. Perhaps he has come upon this earth for our happiness—for our advantage. We should, above all, respect the youngsters. They especially need liberty and space. Respect the youngsters!

(A pause.)

Baron.—(Dreamily.) Yes—for better things—that recalls my family—an ancient race. In Catherine's time, nobles—warriors. Originally from France. They served the country well, and ever rose higher and higher. Under Nicholas I, my Grandfather, Gustave Debille, occupied a high position—had a great fortune—hundreds of serfs—horses, chefs——

Nastya.—You lie! 'twas never so!

Baron.—(Jumping up.) What?

Nastya.—'Twas never so!

Baron.—(Shouting.) A house at Moscow—another at Petersburg. Carriages with coats-of-arms——

(Klesch takes the accordion and goes to one side, watching the others.)

Nastya.—Lies!

Baron.—Shut up! I tell you, servants by the dozens——

Nastya.—(Joyously.) Not one!

Baron.—I'll murder you!

Nastya.—(Preparing for a scrap.) Not a carriage!

Satin.—Drop it! Nastya, don't irritate him!

Baron.—You just wait, vermin! My grandfather——

Nastya.—Not a grandfather—nothing! (Satin laughs.)

Baron.—(Beside himself with anger, drops on a bench.) Satin, you tell this—strumpet—— What! you're laughing, too? You don't believe me, either? (He shouts in despair, pounding the table with his fist.) But it's true, devil take you!

Nastya.—(Triumphantly.) Ah! you're howling now, are you? Now you know for yourself how it feels not to be believed.

Klesch.—(Coming back to the table.) I thought they were going to fight.

Baron.—I won't permit you to jeer at me! I've proofs—documents——

Satin.—Oh, drop it! Forget your grandfather's carriages! You can't travel far in bygone carriages——

Baron.—But how dare she——

Nastya.—Just listen! How dare she?

Satin.—Well, you see she does dare. And in what respect is she worse than you, even if in her past there is not only no grandfather or no carriages, but not even a father or a mother?

Baron.—(Quieting down.) Devil take you, you reason coolly; whereas I haven't the character——

Satin.—Better go buy yourself some, then; it comes in handy. (A pause.) Nastya, are you going to the hospital?

Nastya.—What for?

Satin.—To see Natasha.

Nastya.—Have you just thought of her? Why, she left the hospital some time ago, and disappeared. She can't be found anywhere.

Klesch.—It will be curious to see which of the two shall succeed in doing the other most harm, Vaska or Vasilisa.

Nastya.—Oh, Vasilisa will get out of it all right, never fear! She's tricky; while Vaska will certainly be sent to Siberia.

Satin.—For murder committed in a quarrel, it's only imprisonment.

Nastya.—It's a pity! Hard labor in Siberia would be better. That's where every one of you ought to be sent. You ought to be swept away like ordure—into a cesspool.

Satin.—(Surprised.) What's the matter with you? Are you crazy?

Baron.—I'll just give her a few cuffs for her insolence.

Nastya.—You just try it!

Baron.—I'll more than try it!

Satin.—Leave her alone! You shouldn't ill-use a human being. I can't get that old man out of my head. (Laughing.) Wrong no human being. But what if I have been but wronged all my life? What shall I do—put up with it?—pardon it?

Baron.—(To Nastya.) Don't you understand that you're not my equal?

Nastya.—Akh! you wretch, don't you live on me like a worm in an apple? (Homeric laughter from all the men.)

Klesch.—The stupid thing! A spicy apple she is!

Baron.—It's no use to get offended at her. She's an idiot!

Nastya.—You laugh, do you? Well, you don't feel like laughing!

The Actor.—(Gloomily.) Oh, trounce her!

Nastya.—If I could, I would have—— (Picks up a bowl and smashes it on the floor.) That's what I would have done to you.

The Tartar.—Why break the crockery, you stupid woman?

Baron.—(Rising.) I won't stand it any longer. I can and I will——

Nastya.—(Running away from his blows.) Devil!

Satin.—(To Nastya.) Oh, shut up! Who's afraid of you? What's the matter with you, any way?

Nastya.—Wolves! I wish you all were dead! Wolves!

(She leaves.)

The Actor.—(Gloomily.) Amen!

The Tartar.—Akh! The vile Russian woman!—insolent—undisciplined! No Tartar woman would act that way! She knows better.

Klesch.—You must punish her.

Baron.—Carrion!

Klesch.—(Trying the accordion.) It's ready, but its owner don't come.

Satin.—Now let's take a drink.

Klesch.—Thanks—and then 'twill be time to go to sleep.

Satin.—Say, have you got used to us yet?

Klesch.—(After drinking, goes to his bunk.) Well, you see, after all, there are good people everywhere—although at first you may not see them; but when you come to look more carefully, you see that everywhere men are the same—some good, some bad.

(The Tartar arranges his bunk, then gets down on his knees and prays.)

Baron.—(Calling Satin's attention to the Tartar.) Look! look!

Satin.—Let him alone! He's a good devil. (He laughs.) I'm good myself to-day—I don't know why, I'm sure!

Baron.—You're always good when you've been drinking—intelligent, too.

Satin.—Yes, when I've been drinking, everything pleases me. He's praying? Good! Man can believe or not believe—that's his own business. Man is free—he pays for everything—for faith, for atheism, for love, for intelligence. Man pays for everything, and that's why he's free! Truth is man. And what is man? He is neither you nor I nor others. He is you and I and the old man and Napoleon and Mohammed and the others all in one. (He draws in the air the figure of a man.) Do you understand? He's immense. In him is each and every beginning and each and every end. All in man and all for man! Nothing exists but man—all the rest is the creation of his arm and of his brain. Ma-a-a-n! It's magnificent! sounds superb! Ma-a-a-n! He should be respected, not pitied; not humiliated by pity, but respected. Come, Baron, drink to man! (He rises.) It does one good to feel himself a man. I'm an assassin, a thief—just so. When I'm passing along the street, people avoid me, and often they cry, "Wretch! thief! go to work!" Work? What for? To eat? To gormandize? (He laughs.) I've always despised those that thought too much of their bellies. Man is above that; he is no belly-god!

Baron.—(Shaking his head.) You spout—that does you good—warms your heart; but I can't do it—don't know how. (Looking around him, then in a low and cautious voice:) I'm afraid, terribly afraid, sometimes—understand?—about what may come after——

Satin.—(Walking to and fro.) Cock-and-bull stories! Nothing can happen to man; he fears no one.

Baron.—But you see, ever since I can remember, there has floated in my noddle a sort of mist. I have never comprehended things. It seems as if I have done nothing all my life but change clothes. Why? I can't comprehend. I was a student, then I wore the uniform of the School for the Nobility. What did I learn? I can't recall. I married; then I wore a swallow-tail and, later, a dressing-gown. I married a bad woman. Why? I can't comprehend. I got rid of all my means, and then I wore a shiny sack coat and fringed pantaloons. How was I ruined? I can't comprehend. I got a job in the treasury, then I wore another uniform—a cap with a cockade, like my comrades. I robbed the State, and then I put on convict garb. At last, these rags—and all like a dream. Say, isn't it ridiculous?

Satin.—Not very. Rather stupid.

Baron.—That's true; but what was I born for, any way? There must have been some reason, hey?

Satin.—(Laughing.) Probably. Man is born to make things better. (Shaking his head.) Yes, that's it.

Baron.—I wonder where Nastya went. I must find out, because she's always—— (He leaves. A pause.)

The Actor.—Say, Tartar, prince! (The Tartar turns around.) Pray for me.

The Tartar.—(After a silence.) Pray for yourself!

The Actor.—(Comes down quickly from the stove, pours and drinks a glass of vodka, then goes out almost running.) I'm off!

Satin.—You? Where are you going?

(He whistles. Enter Medvedev and Bubnov, both somewhat intoxicated. Bubnov carries in one hand a paper of cracknels, in the other some dried fish. He has a bottle of vodka under his arm, while another bottle protrudes from his coat pocket.)

Medvedev.—The camel is a species of ass—an ass without ears.

Bubnov.—You're a species of ass yourself!

Medvedev.—The camel has no ears at all—he hears through his nostrils.

Bubnov.—(To Satin.) Friend, I've been looking for you in all the pot-houses. Take this bottle; my hands are full.

Satin.—Put your cracknels on the table, then you'll have an empty hand.

Bubnov.—That's so! (To Medvedev.) Look, you brute! There's an intelligent man!

Medvedev.—All thieves are intelligent. I know thieves—they couldn't get along without intelligence. A stupid fellow may be good, but a scoundrel must have a head on his shoulders. Now, as to the camel, you're dead wrong; he's a beast of burden—he has neither horns nor teeth——

Bubnov.—Where are all our people? Hello, there! Show yourselves! I'll treat! Who's in the corner?

Satin.—Won't you be through[illegible]ne at [illegible]ing pretty soon?

Bubnov.—Yes, pretty soon—I[illegible]ight! [illegible]together only a small capital this time. Zhob! Where[illegible]ushka!o?

Klesch.—(Coming to the ta[illegible]e isn't here.

Bubnov.—Hey, there, bullve you[illegible]brrr, brrr! Baron, don't bark or growl! Drink! be [illegible] It's my treat—I'll treat everybody—I love to treat, y[illegible]e truth[illegible]w. If I were rich, I'd start a free pot-house—devil take [illegible]od and[illegible] wouldn't!—with music and song. Enter, drink, eat, lis[illegible] the music, take a snooze—everything free! Is a man [illegible]ed? Bring him to my pot-house. Satin, that's what I've go[illegible]d give you half of my capital! That's the kind of a husband[illegible]m!

Satin.—Well, then, g[illegible]ught you [illegible]now.

Bubnov.—All my capital? R[illegible]ou? Well, here you are! Here's a ruble, a twenty-k[illegible]rasc[illegible]ece—five—two—that's all.

Satin.—Very good! They'll b[illegible]er with me. I'll gamble with them.

Medvedev.—I'm witness. The money has been given for safe-keeping. How much was it?

Bubnov.—You're a camel! We need no witnesses.

Alushka.—(Enters, barefooted.) Friends, I got my feet wet.

Bubnov.—Well, then, come wet your whistle. But it's a bad thing to drink—bad for the health!

Alushka.—So I see by your actions! You don't act like a man except when you're drunk. Klesch, is the accordion repaired? (He plays, sings and dances.)

Bubnov.—(To Medvedev.) We need no witnesses, I tell you; and you're done for, any way, as a policeman—you're neither a cop nor an uncle.

Alushka.—Only the husband of Aunt Kvasnya.

Bubnov.—One of his nieces is in prison, the other dying.

Medvedev.—(Proudly.) You lie! She isn't dying; she has only gone away without leaving her address. (Satin laughs.)

Bubnov.—It doesn' [illegible] man without nieces isn't an uncle.

Enter Zhob, followed [illegible] of vagabonds, men and women, who und[illegible] own on the bunks.

Zhob.—Bubnov, wher[illegible] pear to?

Bubnov.—Come here a[illegible] We'll sing that favorite song of mine, you know[illegible]

The Tartar.—It's night. [illegible] want to sleep. Sing in the daytime.

Bubnov.—And your arm, [illegible] —have they cut it off?

The Tartar.—No; I'll w[illegible] ile. Perhaps it won't be necessary. Arms are not i[illegible] know; it don't take long to cut them off

Zhob.—Well, Hassan, [illegible] done for any way. Without an arm you're no accou[illegible] They only value our arms and backs. No arm, no man! [illegible] you may as well come and drink vodka.

Kvasnya.—(Entering.) Good-evening, friends. My, how cold it is out! Is my wretch of a husband here? The brute!

Medvedev.—Here I am.

Kvasnya.—Got my jacket on again, too! and boozy besides! What does that mean?

Medvedev.—On account of the celebration—Bubnov's—and then the cold, the mud!

Kvasnya.—Look out for yourself! Pretty reason, the mud! Come, let's go to bed and get some sleep.

Medvedev.—Yes, sleep if we can—it's time.

(He goes into the kitchen.)

Satin.—You're a little rough on him.

Kvasnya.—It isn't possible to be otherwise with a man like him. I married him because I thought he, a military man, would be useful to me. You're such ardent fellows—and I'm a woman, you know. But now he has taken to drink, and that don't suit me.

Satin.—You've made a bad choice of a protector.

Kvasnya.—Where would I have found a better? You wouldn't live with me, would you? And even if you would, it wouldn't last a week; you'd lose me at cards, and all I have.

Satin.—(Laughing.) That's right! I believe I would.

Kvasnya.—So you see—— Alushka! hey, Alushka!

Alushka.—Here I am.

Kvasnya.—What tales have you been spreading round about me?

Alushka.—Nothing but the truth. "There's a woman for you," I said, "a marvel! Blood and bones and fat, ten pud—but brains, not an ounce."

Kvasnya.—That's a lie! I've got brains enough. But why did you say I thrashed my husband?

Alushka.—Well, I thought you were thrashing him when you were dragging him around by the hair.

Kvasnya.—(Laughing.) You rascal! You might at least have pretended not to have seen. Why wash our dirty linen in public? Besides, your talk provoked him. It made him take to drink.

Alushka.—Then that saying is true, is it, that wet hens drink, also? (Satin and Klesch laugh.)

Kvasnya.—You rascal! What sort of a man are you?

Alushka.—Of highest quality! Good for anything! Wherever my nose leads, I follow!

Bubnov.—(Beside the Tartar's bunk.) Come, now; since I won't let you sleep, we'll sing—all night, too; eh, Zhob?

Alushka.—And I'll accompany you.

Satin.—Go ahead!

The Tartar.—(Smiling.) Yes, go ahead, devil Bubnov! Pour out the vodka; we'll drink and have a jolly time! When death comes we'll die!

Bubnov.—Satin, pour it out. Zhob, sit down. Akh! my friends, man is content with so little! I, for example, have been drinking, and am quite content! Sing, Zhob, sing—the favorite. I'll drink and sing, and then—I'll cry.

Zhob.—(Sings.) "The sun rises and sets——"

Bubnov.—(Sings.) "But my cell is always sombre."

(The door is suddenly opened.)

Baron.—(In the doorway, shouts.) Hey, you! Come! All! Quick! Yonder—in that deserted field—the Actor—has hung himself!

(Silence. Every one looks at the Baron. Behind him appears Nastya with wide-open, staring eyes. She goes slowly toward the table.)

Satin.—(In a low voice.) Akh! He has spoiled our evening's fun—the imbecile!

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